KIA LINDROOS

Now-Time | Image-Space

TEMPORALIZATION OF POLITICS IN

Walter Benjamin's

PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY AND ART



SoPhi

KIA LINDROOS

Now-Time | Image-Space

TEMPORALIZATION OF POLITICS IN WALTER BENJAMIN'S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY AND ART

SoPhi

University of Jyväskylä 1998

SoPhi
University of Jyväskylä

SoPhi is a publication series at the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of Jyväskylä, Finland. SoPhi publishes studies on social policy, sociology, political science and philosophy. Texts are chosen for publication on the basis of expert review.

Correspondence should be sent to
publications editor Juha Virkki
Department of Social Sciences
and Philosophy/Publications
University of Jyväskylä
P.O. Box 35
FIN-40351 Jyväskylä, Finland

tel. +358-(0)14 603123
fax +358-(0)14-603101
e-mail jutavi@dodo.jyu.fi

Publications can be ordered from
Kampus Kirja
Kauppakatu 9,
FIN-40100 Jyväskylä, Finland

tel. +358-(0)14-603157
fax +358-(0)14-611143
e-mail kampuskirja@co.jyu.fi.

Visit SoPhi home page at
http://www.jyu.fi/~yhtfil/sophi/sop.html

ISBN 951-39-0341-9

ISSN 1238-8025

Printed at Jyväskylä University Print House, Jyväskylä 1998
Cover printed at ER-Paino, Laukaa, 1998

Cover by Tuija Tarkiainen
Layout by Petri Heikkinen

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Following Proust, every history needs its awakening. And so my writing of Benjamin, which I have practised in the achsel of Berlin-Jyväskylä-London, has reached its state of disruption.

A long time ago I worked in Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, where I learnt German by reading Benjamin's Briefe. At the same time, I also worked in the Martin Gropius Bau, in the Stationen der Moderne-exhibit. Although I have realised since then that Benjamin's German was not mainstream, this year began a new course of learning for me, which has materialised into this book. This is the most pleasant part of the history, as it allows me the possibility to thank the people to whom I am grateful for their important contributions to this book, although it is impossible for me to thank all of you to whom I am indebted. Without you, the process of creating this work would have been much less inspiring, less complex and far more lonely.

Primarily, I warmly thank my mother and the memory of my father for teaching me the skills of living. Your limitless support and presence whenever needed have created this strong, although sometimes stubborn, belief in myself and in my ideas.

Kari Palonen, one of the true intellectuals in Finnish academic culture, has been a considerable support since I began my studies in political science. I owe you my thanks for your guiding spirit and friendship, and for the inexhaustible amount of material, suggestions and commentary, so helpful in finalising my work. I also would like to thank Wolf-Dieter Narr, the other companion in our Finnish Academy project, The Temporalization of Politics, for your inspiration in practising the writing with series of disposes. Your humorous Geist, combined with critical notions and true support were essential to the work on the limits of time.

Peter Osborne contributed with his substantial and sharp insight on Benjamin. Your friendly help made it possible for me to finish my work at The

Centre for Research of Modern European Philosophy at the Middlesex University, in London. The city of London also provided me with a baffling amount of material and new ideas, and access to the material at the British Film Institute had a major impact on the completion of the film part of my study. London is also a central meeting place for an abundance of interesting scholars. One of them is Mike Shapiro, to whom I am grateful, firstly, for inspiring me to look at images from a political perspective, and secondly, for providing important commentary during the last phase of my writing.

In between Berlin and London, I have worked in the frames of the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy in the University of Jyväskylä. I would like to thank all of my colleagues for their patience in sharing the worries and sketches of this work, and following my sometimes obscure inspirations as I attempted to reach the depth of time. I would especially like to thank Leena Subra for providing such a wonderful model of the completion of her dissertation, and also for the friendship that grows above philosophy.

The department would not been a department without, firstly, the students, with whom I was able to share ideas concerning politics and arts, as well as the Benjaminian view; they were exceptional learning opportunities for me, too. Secondly, my special thanks to Arja Valkonen, the secretary of the department, for her long-time friendship and support, and to Riitta Kuusimäki, thanks for sharing the worries and helping with all the papers, also from overseas. After moving from Jyväskylä, my thoughts have also returned to my ex-roommates at the library, Sari Husa and Leena Honkanen, for sharing the ambiguity of simultaneously working and talking. I also fondly think of you, as also other mothers of small children, who are bravely struggling between academic and domestic spheres.

During the creation of this book I have been involved with a couple of active networks, and their meetings in various places throughout Europe have offered me an arena in which to present my views to an international audience through my participation in different conferences and seminars. The comments were sometimes surprising, but the discussions have all been most useful, whether they happened at the events themselves or after dark. Since I started my postgraduate work, the network of Conceptual Studies has broadened my knowledge on the issues and problems surrounding concepts. The discussions around Koselleck, and finally meeting him in person were inspiring, and also critical arena of thoughts on conceptual sensitivity. The growing group around Politics and the Arts, whose birth in Bordeaux I had the pleasure of attending, have been the primary inspiration for interdisciplinary research. The existence of this group and the possibility to contact scholars around the world who are dealing with these issues gave me more courage to follow unknown paths. I especially thank the convenor Maureen Whitebrook for your professional and personal advice on my manuscript, and for your friendship and support during the writing itself. Most recently I have also been involved with the Cultural Policy network, organised by Anita Kangas. Combining these networks offers me inspiration for future plans and the challenge to create the new fields of intrests.

The manuscript has been read by Professors Kari Palonen, Wolf-Dieter Narr, Ilkka Heiskanen, Peter Osborne and Michael Shapiro. I am thankful to you all for your fair and fruitful support and critique

The person who has gone into the manuscript with depth and detail, combining humour with a stressed schedule, is Lissu Moulton, whose linguistic skills and series of postcards were irreplaceable in the end of my work. Thanks! The rest of the mistakes are fully my responsibility.

For their financial support, I firstly would like to thank The Finnish Academy for making it possible for me to spend the last few years mainly concerned about my interpretation of Benjamin. The finishing touches were made possible by the University of Jyväskylä, through a grant from Rector Aino Sallinen and from the Network of Cultural Policy Research. I also thank the department of Social Sciences and Philosophy for contributing with various costs tied to my dissertation. For being courageous enough to publish this book, I am grateful to SoPhi and to Juha Virkki and Petri Heikkinen for their help.

Aside from all of the aforementioned people to whom I am indebted, the most patient teacher of the meaning of Time has been my daughter, Ruth. I cannot express to you how important this time has been, and how brave and loving a daughter you are. The other teacher of all of life's beauty above and beyond its temporality; my music, my passion and my inexhaustible support, even during the last tiring moments of this process, is my Zoran. With you, there is nothing but Now, duso moja jedina.

London, September 1998.

Kia Lindroos

PREFACE

BENJAMIN'S 'COPERNICAN CHANGE'

Das "Moderne" die Zeit der Hölle
(Benjamin, PW: 676)

How *are we to understand and attain the knowledge of the present time?* This question has haunted me throughout the course of my research on Walter Benjamin's (1892-1940) thinking, causing me much unrest. As my interest grew further, this primary question merged with other issues, such as the temporality of politics, arts and images, as expressed in Benjamin's thought. During my work, my common sense view on temporality seemed to become 'auratic' in the sense outlined by Karl Kraus; the closer I came to approaching it, the greater the distance appeared between us[1]. First, the meaning of time began to blur, after which the previously ordered facts landed in a state of destruction. At that moment, I was close to underlining Benjamin's dictum: *modernity, the time of hell*. After re-conceptualising the temporal ideas from Benjaminian perspective, I became ready to present this question in public and somewhat academically: what, then, is the present time, and what does it have to do with politics?

My subtitle, the temporalization of politics, suggests a cairologic approach to time, which emphasises the role of *singular temporalities* in both political and aesthetic experiences. *Firstly*, cairology differs from chronology with regard to the temporal order of historical events. The *temporalization*, which is done through emphasising singular moments in history or in the present, searches for ways to approach especially political time alternatively to chronologically conceived historical time, without intending to replace it.

In Greek, *Chronos* has the more definite meaning of as a destructive force of time, an objective, measurable time, and a long duration of time. It is basically identified with the perishable aspect of life, as the Chronos is understood as overcoming the individual existence. In the contemporary meaning, the

Chronos is comparable to the more common understanding of the chronological, quantitative measuring of time. This is roughly how the Chronos will be signified in this research. Kairos is the youngest son of Zeus in Greek mythology. He is the personification of opportunity, which signifies the right time for action. This idea of the fulfilment of time through action is a transformational point in the understanding of time as separate from the Chronos, because with the appearance of Kairos, the expression of the ancient and Christian worlds as an eschatological fulfilment come to cross each other[2].

Secondly, since Aristotle's Physics, the Western conceptualisation of time has mainly been understood as abstract, linear time, which is associated with motion. The quantitative idea, especially in the social sciences, view time as a serious meta-organiser of one's life in the form of the Chronos, and discussions on time-tabling life, or spare speculations with time-budgeting, saving time or sparing time, consuming, using or selling time are increasingly included in sociological analysis[3]. For instance, according to Anthony Giddens, an account of modern organisations must be firmly based upon a theory of organisation[4]. The organisation is a "social system, which is able to bracket time-space, and which does so via the reflexive monitoring of system reproduction and the articulation of discursive history"[5]. Giddens discusses how not only organisation 'in' time-space, but organisation 'of' time-space is elementary to all societal systems. This might be included in the question of how one sees the organisation as connected with organisable time (and space), and how this affects the understanding of time and space in general.

However, the strategy of organisational time-bracketing, which is closely connected to the idea of politics as administrative action, shows an opposite pole from the temporal idea, which shall be discussed throughout my work. The cairologic approach neither searches for means of measuring or understanding movement through temporal continuity, nor attempts to control the dynamics of time and action through freezing them. Instead, this approach emphasises breaks, ruptures, non-synchronised moments and multiple temporal dimensions. Politics deal with manoeuvring between the temporal dynamic of movement and its standstill, and simultaneously attempt to liberate the space of action towards a new direction, opened from the specific collision of the past and present experiences, which is referred to as Now-time (*Jetztzeit*).

Benjamin's idea of politics implies an understanding of the political action as a field, which is essentially tied to present time and its plural temporal dynamics, as opposed to its homogeneous organisation. The dynamic is also included in the attempt to characterise action in relation to various new concepts of time. All of the constellations of the present and political that emerge from Benjamin's images of thought are approached here as creating and re-defining the contents of temporalized politics. The idea is inspired by Benjamin's notions of the temporality of history and politics, which crystallises into the claim of a *Copernican change*:

> Die kopernikanische Wendung in der geschichtlichen Anschauung ist diese: man hielt für den fixen Punkt das "Gewesene" und sah die Gegenwart

> bemüht, an dieses Feste die Erkenntnis tastend heranzuführen. Nun soll sich dieses Verhältnis umkehren und das Gewesene zum dialektischen Umschlag, zum Einfall des erwachten Bewußtseins werden. Die Politik erhält den Primat über die Geschichte (PW: 490-91).

This change inaugurates a new conception of time, a shift towards the primacy of the present time. According to Benjamin, the shift follows a change of a transfer of perspective, which outlines the understanding of time as shifting from homogeneously conceived historical towards political categories of thinking. The claim also includes the challenge to 'construct' theoretical political categories through emphasising the present (PW: 1026). In my terms, Benjamin's claim describes the movement between chronologically conceived history and the cairologically characterised present, between totality and singularity, and he actualises their collision in the space of emerging historical or cultural ruptures. It also describes and criticises the homogenised structure in the art historical canon. However, I do not wish to revert to the Kantian categorisation of time in my construction of a critical view on the understanding of time from the point of the linearity, development or causality of actions. In fact, I do not wish to categorise time or temporality at all, since my view to the present time is constituted through *qualitative differences*, which are constructed through a reflection between past and present moments.

These qualitative differences of time become apparent through experiences, action, and a subjective acknowledgement of temporally changing situations. In concentrating on the variety of moments which include experience and action as producing another view on time and its dimensions other than linearity, the singular moments of temporal insight are possible to decipher as the 'seeds of the present'. Following Benjamin, the present and its experience are temporarily 'frozen' in historical or actual material and phenomena. This material may vary from works of art to historical texts, architecture, fashion, film or political manifestos. In fact, what is used as the object of analysis or perception is unimportant. It is more important to uncover the specific present that is webbed in the structures of the chosen material, and which becomes created anew during the course of our interpretation.

However, Benjamin did not only raise the question of the present, but also searched for a new concept of history, one based on temporal discontinuity and rupture, and defined in the collision point of history and the present. In searching for this new idea of history, the temporal rupture between past and present forms a cairologic perspective that not only characterises an alternative view on history, but also constructs a vivid image of the everyday experience. It implies the conception of the nature of the 'real' presence, or in other words, it means the creation of the present in action. All in all, Benjamin did not operate with abstract, empty or homogeneous definitions of time, but fixed his attention on a very singular definition, as he paid attention to the moment of the Now (*Jetztzeit*).

My main title, *Now-time/Image-space*, combines two ways of approaching the present. The *Now-time* offers an entrance to Benjamin's textual and intellectual

world, and it forms both a query and theory of the new concept of 'time'. The concept of *Image-space* offers a perspective, which reaches out of Benjamin-exegesis, and it expands the interpretation to the aesthetic experience and perception. As the moment of Now intensifies the singular experience of time, 'higher actuality' of time which creates another layer of the temporal experience, is reached by images. As such, I consider Benjamin's concept of images as another step in thinking about time altogether, not only as a disruption of the historical linear time, but as bringing a new perspective to the historical, political and aesthetic times. A further function of the Image-space is to open the query of how conceptualise subjectivity and subjective perception as a space of reflection, in which spatial and temporal borders between the object and subject are seen as vanishing, as the limits between subject and object merge in the acts of perception and experience. The Image-space also offers a creative form of political thinking, as the space is conceived of as emerging and varying in immediate interaction with a singular actor, and is not definable by an occupational or totalizable idea of space, such as a state, nation or territory.

Despite Benjamin's fragmentary style of writing, I claim that if his work is approached from the temporal perspective, it appears as surprisingly systematic, as the issues of time and history are constantly present in Benjamin's thought. His *Theses Über den Begriff der Geschichte* (1940), which turned out to be Benjamin's intellectual testament, is the most explicit document of this problematic. Yet, his interest in the historico-philosophical issue as well as the critique of the concept of progress in connection to the emphasis on the present time, were already clearly expressed in his earliest publications, especially in the beginning of *Das Leben der Studenten*[6]. By creating a time span between these two texts, and by focusing on the issue of temporality in his other major works, the problem of conceptualising history and time is, in my view, one of the major topics through which a coherent image of Benjamin's thinking emerges. The temporal viewpoint also highlights an alternative perspective in discussing Benjamin's theory of art, especially in the era of reproducibility, and also emphasises the meaning that he gave to the inter-war artistic scene as creat-ing both political and aesthetic disruption in the previous aesthetic tradition.

Yet, Benjamin's path as an intellectual was not mainstream. The exceptions side paths in both the material and practise of his research, shaped his own route. The difficulty of following this route is that he consequently focused his attention on the differences and disconnections, instead of the generally approved interpretations, especially in the academic world. This caused much confusion on and rejection of his work, as it appeared too fragmentary or heuristic for academically 'rigorous' interpretations.

Benjamin himself uses the metaphor of a ship that proceeds in its course, consciously following the by-paths, in describing this motive in his own thinking.

> Vergleich der Versuche der andern mit Unternehmen der Schiff-fahrt, bei denen die Schiffe vom magnetischen Nordpol abgelenkt werden. *Diesen*

> Nordpol zu finden. Was für die anderen Abweichungen sind, das sind für mich die Daten, die meinen Kurs bestimmen. – Auf den Differentialen der Zeit, die für die anderen die "großen Linien" der Untersuchung stören, baue ich meine Rechnung auf (PW: 570).

However, these by-paths also show the mainstream in a different light, and this light comes to appear only in an era that offers enough material on, and a suitable interest in the knowledge of reading works of difference. Following the canon of Benjamin interpretations, it seems that that the era of the end of this century has reached the phase in which Benjamin's texts have found a fruitful ground for reflection. Generally speaking, Benjamin also provides a work that is in the cross-roads of Judao-Christian tradition, as well as being in between rational and aesthetic modernity. This interdisciplinary perspective on politics and aesthetic makes my work impossible to strictly define within the places and spaces of Western intellectual tradition. Both the difficulty and the fascination of this approach is to construct a temporal journey, viewed from the moment of the Now.

CRITIQUE AND THE CREATION OF CONCEPTS

On the Conceptual Method

Given its breadth, the question of the *temporalization of politics* must naturally be restricted. I choose the examination of the issue through Benjamin's use and construction of concepts as my methodological approach in this research. I regard Benjamin's philosophy as a conceptual practice, although not as reduced only to it. The main reasons for choosing to focus on the concepts are, firstly, that I decipher Benjamin's motives of thinking about time and history through his concepts, and secondly, that the issue is a link throughout this work, combining the ideas of history and images; of works of art and cinema. I consider Benjamin's *own* theory of language and his sensitivity towards the conceptual question as supporting my approach, since for Benjamin, the textual level, and its crystallisation in concepts, appears as a surface off of which the other phenomena are reflected (cf. 1925: 213-214).

Benjamin's way of writing is distinctly poetic, and he himself offers no definitions of his concepts. Consequently, the meanings and connotations of his concepts must be 'dug out' of the texts through an interpretation in the context of his intra-textual world. This creates the reflection between Benjamin's text and its meaning, and highlights the importance of the method of interpretation of specific questions, of a considerable importance. Due to the conceptual interest, and because the different elements of Benjamin's thinking, from earlier to later thinking on art, history or literature are often intertwined in his works, I do not wish to cut his thinking into sequences, thus restricting it temporally or thematically. Although I recognise the differences between the earlier and later phases of Benjamin's work, I consider that the conceptual perspective

allows me to reflect on his thinking within and between the selected texts, and also allows me to characterise his more extensive thought as proceeding from conceptual singularities to broader ideas. All of this produces a sphere, which will be referred to as 'Benjamin's thinking'.

There are two further reasons for my conceptual approach. *Firstly*, the question is embedded in Benjamin's own interest in terminology. As I shall show, he was himself constantly creating new concepts with specific temporal characters. This creativity is the one important aspect that constitutes Benjamin's originality as a thinker. *Secondly*, the study of Benjamin's concepts shows how their position and meaning is not always in accordance with the general lines of intellectual traditions, but that they gather elements from aesthetic and political theories, theology, literature, philosophy, aesthetics and art into a collage-like presentation (*Darstellung*). As I shall claim, Benjamin reaches the theoretical limit spaces in these new concepts, which escape the more defined spaces of Western academic culture.

The conceptual approach departs from the idea that within and throughout the concepts, Benjamin expresses his interpretation of the change, critique and transformation of phenomena. Benjamin's concepts are not characteristically objective or instrumental, and without close inspection, their use might appear as inconsequential to his reader. This apparent inconsequentiality might also explain why his concepts were hardly ever serious objects of focus of the Benjaminian scholars[7]. Yet, upon closer inspection, these 'blocks' of textual construction exemplify Benjamin's dualistic use of concepts as both the target and subject of critique. This is one more reason why it is worth reading Benjamin carefully enough to make this distinction visible.

I consider Benjamin as himself practising a conceptual study, although never defining it as such, nor characterising it as a methodological principle. He did not emphasise the historical transfer in a chronological sense, but did outline the importance of the concepts as they crystallised the variety of phenomena that he described. In this specific sense, Benjamin was a conceptual historian *avant la lettre*. However, Benjamin's conceptual praxis differs from the generally understood idea of philology as a discipline. Rather, Benjamin's approach is a praxis of writing and rewriting the meanings of concepts in the inter-textual context[8]. The conceptual aspect becomes visible especially in the *Kunstwerk* essay, and also in *Über den Begriff der Geschichte*, which are the primary material of my study. In these essays, Benjamin pays attention to both the temporal ideas of history and of work of art, as well as to their transformation in the modern era.

How the importance of concepts and the terminology was emphasised throughout Benjamin's own thinking becomes evident through this quote from a letter to Gershom Scholem, dated 14.2.1921.

> Über Philologie habe ich (...) mir einige Gedanken gemacht .(...) Mir scheint – ich weiß nicht ob ich es im selben Sinne wie Sie verstehe – Philologie verspricht gleich aller geschichtlichen Forschung, aber aufs höchste gesteigert, die Genüsse die die Neuplatoniker in der Askese der Kontemplation

> suchten. Vollkommenheit statt Vollendung, gewährleistetes Verlöschen der Moralität. (...) Sie bietet eine Seite der Geschichte, oder besser eine Schicht des Historischen dar, für die der Mensch zwar vielleicht regulative, methodische, wie konstitutive, elementar-logische Begriffe mag erwerben können; aber der Zusammenhang zwischen ihnen muß ihm verborgen bleiben. Ich definiere Philologie nicht als Wissenschaft oder Geschichte der Sprache sondern in ihrer tiefsten Schicht als *Geschichte der Terminologie*, wobei man es dann sicher mit einem höchst rätselhaften Zeitbegriff und sehr rätselhafte Phänomenen zu tun hat (Br. 257).

Benjamin sketches the philology as an approach that reveals a specific layer of history. In general, his attitude to philology was simultaneously critical and constructive. He criticised the eternal aspect of the invariable language in the Platonic and Neo-platonic "search for the asceticism in the contemplation" (Br. 257). Philology should consist of the aspect of *transformation*, as opposed to temporal stability. In Benjamin's view, terminology was constantly transforming, which became as necessary to the discussion on temporality. The temporal meanings were not to remain 'a secret', as he criticised in the Neoplatonian approach, but their 'mysterious time-concept' was to be unfolded. All in all, the temporality of the concepts did not offer a condition for, but rather the material for the new interpretations[9].

As Tiedemann notes in his *Einleitung for Das Passagen-Werk*, Benjamin's terminology emerged mainly from his own thinking. As such, his terms were impossible to define through 'orthodox' interpretation, even if he used them ideologically (PW: 21). This dilemma is obvious, for instance, in the discussion between Benjamin and Adorno, concerning one of Benjamin's last works, the draft for *Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire* (1939). In his reply to Adorno's critique concerning the method of the work, Benjamin recalls his method as the *real philological method* (*echte philologische Methode*), which he claimed to have constructed already in *Trauerspiel*[10]. In my interpretation, the suffix 'real', which Benjamin uses in varying connections, outlines a critical view towards the 'previous' understanding (in this case of philology) rather than a substantial argument for the real essence of things[11]. In other words, here, 'real' marks a distance and the possibility of a conceptual critique.

Interest in the conceptual question was not a typical approach in Benjamin's contemporary Germany. Only later, around the 1960's, did Reinhart Koselleck begin to outline conceptual research as a methodological approach to history. Koselleck's way of seeing the concepts as temporalized is interesting to my research on Benjamin, as Koselleck considers the *concepts as creating a new relation to time.* For Koselleck, attempting to conceive of the characteristics of nature of time signified the decline of *Chronos*-time, and the temporality also represented an element in the use of concepts. This is especially apparent in his article *Neuzeit. Zur Semantik moderner Bewegungsbegriffe*. As he discusses the experience of time, he opens a temporal, rather than a spatial view towards conceptual change:

> Die Zeit bleibt nicht nur die Form, in der sich alle Geschichten abspielen, sie gewinnt selber eine geschichtliche Qualität. Nicht mehr in der Zeit, sondern durch die Zeit vollzieht sich dann die Geschichte. Die Zeit wird dynamisiert zu einer Kraft der Geschichte selber [12].

In Vergangene Zukunft Koselleck ponders the meaning of historical time when it is distinguished from chronology, psychical-astronomical, natural time or biological time[13]. Benjamin's approach differs, while he made the basic distinction between historical and political 'categories of time', on the basis of how one understands the present. The present itself, without historical or future references such as experience or expectation, is the dimension that lacks the most in Koselleck's extensive reflections on historical time. For Benjamin, the present is the starting point in the approach of creating a critical view towards history through his own concepts[14]. Neologisms, such as *Jetztzeit* or *Geistesgegenwart,* emerged from the historical ruptures, which illustrated the confrontation between the moments Now and Then.

Further points of approach, in which Koselleck's theories are fruitful in thinking about Benjamin's reflections on history, are, for instance, the distinction between historical *Aufschreibung, Fortschreibung and Umschreibung*[15]. Especially the third form, the revised writing of history using new approaches and queries, is the point from which I read Benjamin's Theses as initiating a reflection on the concept of history and its temporality. For Benjamin, the history of 19th century Germany was, following the Nietzschean characterisation, the history of winners. Instead of continuing this canon, he attempted to present history as a broader concept, which would also include the marginal and forgotten elements. This was followed by his personal experiences of exile and the temporal-political contingency of the Weimar republic.

Benjamin's Idea of Critique

Especially in his later work, Benjamin collected material that he interpreted through his philological view. In the earlier mentioned letter to Adorno, Benjamin stresses that the philological attitude is both a precondition, and also the real predicament of the *critique* (Br. 793). The philological attitude was also closely connected with his earlier idea of a critique, in fact, sometimes so closely that the difference between these two aspects remained indecipherable. Benjamin's simultaneous attempt at commenting on current events and criticising the traditional view, constitutes the dualistic functions of the concepts in his study, as he simultaneously analyses the phenomena of particular concepts, while recomposing them through critique[16].

> In dieser ihrer Aufteilung unterstehen die Phänomene den Begriffen. Die sind es, welche an den Dingen die Lösung in die Elemente vollziehen. (...) Durch ihre Vermittlerrolle leihen die Begriffe den Phänomenen Anteil am Sein der Ideen. Und eben diese Vermittlerrolle macht sie tauglich zu der anderen, gleich ursprünglichen Aufgabe der Philosophie, zur Darstellung

> der Ideen. Indem die Rettung der Phänomene vermittels der Ideen sich vollzieht, vollzieht sich die Darstellung der Ideen im Mittel der Empirie. Denn nicht an sich selbst, sondern einzig und allein in einer Zuordnung dinglicher Elemente im Begriff stellen die Ideen sich dar. Und zwar tun sie es als deren Konfiguration (1925: 213-4).

This quote describes Benjamin's comprehension of the concepts as having a mediating role between phenomena and ideas. The productive side of this idea, which leads to the construction of the neologisms, becomes apparent when one pays attention to how Benjamin's concepts function as a redemption (*Erlösung*) of the phenomena. However, the idea and concept of redemption which is included in most of Benjamin's work, is complex. In my approach, I do not reduce it to Jewish mysticism, but rather connect the idea of redemption to the idea of the critique as a *philosophical principle*[17]. In this insight, the redemption offers a *critical moment*, rather than a religious claim, and the critique makes the salvation (*Rettung*) of earlier phenomena possible in the moment of their redefinition. I consider the critique to also be part of Benjamin's 'immanent critique" in his specific historical context[18], as well as a critique leading to the stage in which the view on interpreted phenomena might be redefined.

Following the idea of *Erlösung*, I understand Benjamin's concept of Rettung as aiming to combine the issues of the Jewish origins to the temporal problematic[19]. In Benjamin's thought the event of salvaging past events happens through their critique and actualisation as the historical possibility of understanding these events occurs. This does not necessarily aim at a 'better', cumulative understanding of the events, but instead stresses a *different understanding*, which might lead deeper towards the truth-content of the subject, and which legitimises the heterogeneity of the historical events and their interpretations as they emerge in different times. All these tasks are intricately related to Benjamin's conceptual and philological interest.

Benjamin's critique mainly concerns the inner order of the phenomena, and an attempt to unfold this inner order as a philosophical critique, makes it visible to the subject of knowledge. This approach is also included in Benjamin's method of presentation or performance as *Darstellung* (cf. 1925: 213-214, and 214ff.). The concepts collect and also verbalise the various extremities of the phenomena. Additionally, the twofold philosophical task of the *Darstellung*, namely, to salvage the phenomena and present the ideas in a specific constellation of events, is solved through the concepts (1925: 215). The concepts include the seeds of both analysis and reconstruction, in addition to critique and interpretation in themselves.

The moment of historical disruption was important in Benjamin's model of critique, as it means stepping out of the canonical interpretation of phenomena. In my research, the specific examples of this disruption are outlined *firstly*, through the issue of the detachment of the concept of history from its chronological temporality, and *secondly*, by the question of how the work of art is detached from the canon of art history. Here, the work of art is conceived as

existing in the temporal rupture, and Benjamin finds the rupture and an escape from the chronological temporality through his concepts of images.

In a more specific literary context, the idea of critique in Benjamin's work does not refer to the general understanding of criticism, but it is a critique (*Kritik*) that *distinguishes itself from commentary*. The task of the critique is to emphasise the inner order (*Zusammenhang*) of the phenomena in question, and not its external or historically constructed commentary. The preliminary idea for this can be found in Benjamin's early work, especially in his dissertation, *Begriff der Kunstkritik* (1919), in which the critique refers to the concept of the art critique. Benjamin developed the concept of critique further in the Goethe's *Wahlverwandtschaften* (1922), which explicitly related the issue to the literary critique of Goethe's work. Benjamin combined the ambivalence of the Goethean conception of the works of art, which in principle are impossible to criticise (*Unkritisierbarkeit der Werke*, 1919:110), with his ideas of redemptive critique, dating back to early German romanticism. The task of the critique in his essay on Goethe was to distinguish the philosophical truth content (*Wahrheitsgehalt*) from its material content (*Sachgehalt*). The critique concerns the former, whereas the commentary refers to the latter, and Benjamin more or less undertakes this task in reviews and literary critique throughout his life[20].

I consider Benjamin's critical perspective as also inherently political, which is perhaps an idea which requires some explanation[21]. The political character is included in the demand for action. The critique is not completely distinguishable from action, in cases where action means at least the reversion or re-interpretation of the matter in question. The re-interpretation was seen as happening in immediate connection with the present time. The direct bondage to the present, as expressed in the *Copernican change*, is politically characteristic. However, Benjamin's political critique was not explicitly thematized in any other works than in *Zur Kritik der Gewalt* (1921), in which the target of the critique was the historico-philosophical continuum of power. The critique of the concept of history in *Über den Begriff der Geschichte* combined historical, as well as political critique.

Although Benjamin was sympathetic to the communist movement around the 1920's and 1930's, his political critique cannot simply be characterised as communist, since he also practised a similar critique with regard to the communist and (so called orthodox) Marxist theories and their conceptual praxis. Benjamin criticised his contemporary Marxists as being too restricted in the claim of the orthodox interpretation, which prohibits the realisation of the freedom that Benjamin saw as being included in historical materialist theory. Here, his own Communism was expressed not as credo restricted to the praxis of materialist ideology (Br. 604-605), but as innovative and heretical, drawing inspiration from the artistic rather than from the academic Marxists.

Benjamin expressed the connection between the political and conceptual critiques, for example, arguing that the continuum of concepts like power form a unified image, which must be destroyed in order to find the spaces for a new critique: "Die Begriffe der Herrschenden sind allemals die Spiegel (eines Kaleidoskops) gewesen, dank deren das Bild einer 'Ordnung' zustande kam. –

Das Kaleidoskop muß zerschlagen werden" (1939d: 660, PW: 428). The destruction of the kaleidoscopes proceeds throughout the critique and analysis of the concepts 'of the rulers' which otherwise preserve the same image of power as before, although in the varied order of the pieces of the kaleidoscopic mosaic.

The connection between concept and critique constitutes the core issue in the discussion of the conceptual importance in Benjamin's work. Consequently, this outlines the specific idea of the temporal order as an alternative to the chronological history, as Benjaminian cairology can be uncovered through examining the temporality of some of the specific concepts. Through my reading, I shall point out these concepts, speculate on their temporal content, and join them with the critical position. For example, Benjamin's critique of the legal system and its structural idea of power/violence is the focus in Zur *Kritik der Gewalt* (1921); critique of homogenous concept of time and history is outlined in *Der Begriff der Geschichte* (1940) and practised in *Das Passagen-Werk*; the critique of the empty and transcendental concept of experience (*Erfahrung*) in philosophical traditions, such as Kantian and Neokantian thinking, is written in *Über das Programm der kommenden Philosophie* (1918). The changes in the concept of experience in the modern era is outlined in *Erfahrung und Armut* (1933), *Der Erzähler* (1936) and *Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire* (1939).

As mentioned above, Benjamin examines the concept of art critique (*Kunstkritik*) in the dissertation, *Der Begriff der Kunstkritik im deutschen Romantik* (1919), and the praxis of this critique is outlined in Goethe's *Wahlverwandtschaften* (1922). He practised literary criticism throughout his life, for example in the works on Baudelaire, Proust, Kafka, Valérie or Brecht. The intended habilitation, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (1925) could be seen as opposing the bourgeois, but also the rationalised view of aesthetic theory, and it deals centrally with the concepts of *Tragödie and Trauerspiel*[22]. Benjamin's critique turns towards the 'bourgeois' concept of autonomous and spatially distant art, and the concept of aura is outlined as being based on cult and ritual, in *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (1936) and *Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire* (1939). In the *Kunstwerk* essay, the critique and salvation aspect is included further in the concepts of creativity and genius, eternal value and secrecy, as Benjamin attempts to show the specific temporality of the concepts in their fascist use. The aesthetic critique was also practiced in *Der Sürrealismus* and the other aesthetic essays around the 1930's. The new form of writing, which Benjamin practiced in *Einbahnstraße* (1926), *Berliner Kindheit* (1933) and *Zentralpark* (1939), seemed like practising his own method, which was to destroy the discoursive linearity of a text, as well as its unified or narrative form, and to replace it with the chosen approaches to the phenomena.

READING BENJAMIN

Reading Benjamin is not an easy task, since it implies the reconstruction of the connections between the fragments, as well as requires finding their contextual

web of references. Following the methodological notions above, my research proceeds through a 'philosophical reconstruction' of reading and interpreting the temporality of Benjamin's concepts. Through this reading, I shall point out the elements of a cairologic interpretation of time. My primary material is the selected material of Benjamin's *Gesammelte Schriften* which I shall also document in German. The original quotes are necessary in order to specify the meaning of the concepts[23]. In addition to the published texts, I read and quote his letters, drafts and sketched material of the published texts. The reason for this is that, as most of the works discussed here were not completely finished by Benjamin himself, the co-texts provide the necessary material in specifying his intentions or providing more contextual definitions of the concepts used in the discussion. I also use selected commentary on Benjamin and especially in the third part of this work, conclusions of Benjaminian reading are carried further in the study of Benjamin's concepts of images, and in the interpretation on the cinematic material. The film-sections also include selected interdisciplinary material, ranging from films to aesthetic theory.

I shall examine Benjamin's *Über den Begriff der Geschichte* and *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* through closely reading and interpreting the key concepts in the inter-textual context[24]. The interpretation basically moves from Benjamin's *intra-textual* towards an *inter-textual* frame, as my basic interpretation is carried forth in the main text, and the further connections of the issues, mainly within Benjamin's own historical context, are discussed in the footnotes. Since Benjamin's textual level turned out to be heterogeneous and especially because the Theses contain multiple layers of meanings in a very compact form, I found it essential to create a reading that focuses on the singularities rather than the universalities of Benjamin's thinking.

In the first part I interpret the *Theses Über den Begriff der Geschichte* one by one, using co-textual references. I read the *Theses* primarily as single and independent chapters, in which the interpretation is also dependent on the temporal and spatial context of the reader. In this, I mainly follow the chronological order of the published *Theses,* but in some parts, such as in Theses IV-V or X-XIII, the order is confused due to thematic reasons. The temporality of the concepts in the *Theses* is mainly researched by examining the conceptual network built around core concepts like *Now-time, dialectical image, mental presence, politics, history* or *progress*. These concepts are further tied to Benjamin's ideas of *truth, knowledge, tradition* and *origins.* The matter of temporality in the larger frames of the Western tradition, is intensified also in the discussion on the theological idea of time, especially in distinguishing between Christian and Jewish elements and the ideas of progress and catastrophe in history. The temporal contents are materialised in concepts of redemption (*Erlösung*), salvation (*Rettung*) and Messianic time.

The reason why I read the *Theses* before the *Kunstwerk* essay, thus not following their chronological order, is immanent in my question on the temporality. The Theses outline the general horizon of Benjamin's idea of time and history which is specified through singular concepts such as *Jetztzeit* or *Geistesgegenwart.* For my regard, the importance and the meaning of the specific tem-

porality in Benjamin's thinking appears more clearly only *after* reading the temporal content of the Theses. For instance, the reason why the reproducibility of a work of art is an important temporal and political issue is outlined by the confrontation between the singular and universal idea of history. Furthermore, the dangers of the eternal and continuous ideas of both art and history are outlined in Benjamin's critique of fascism and in his de-construction of the tradition. In addition, the history of Benjamin's writing shows that the preliminary conception of the *Theses* was not necessarily made later than that of the *Kunstwerk*.

In the second part my intention in studying *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*, is to produce a re-interpretation of this often quoted essay by emphasising the temporality of, for instance, reproducibility, or the authentic value of the work of art. I shall proceed by reading these 'aesthetic theses', following the method already practised in the historico-philosophical Theses. At the same time, the field of reference is enlarged through the examples of other aesthetic works by Benjamin, especially by paying attention to his early studies on the literary theory and philosophy of the period of early German Romantics. In *Kunstwerk*, I focus primarily on interpreting how the temporal attributes come into sight by Benjamin's critique, and how these attributes are expressed in relation to the concepts of *rituality, cult, aura, art* and *politics*. The concepts of *origins* and *tradition*, which were already emphasised during the reading of the *Theses*, become an especially central feature in this context and lead to the redefinition of the work of art in its changed conditions.

However, while the issue of the reproduction of art is very widely analysed and commented in Benjamin-research, I consider that it is not necessary to deeper into the technical side of the issue. Instead I ask, *how does the temporal nature of reproduction make the art appear political?* In discussing this, I emphasise the role of the avant-garde in the 1920's and 1930's, and put special emphasis on the cinema as an example of art that causes a disruption in the aesthetic tradition. Utilising examples from *Soviet Cinema* and Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, as well as Leni Riefenstahl's *Der Triumph des Willens*, I shall further interpret Benjamin's ideas of cult and ritual in conjunction with the filmic material. The photograph and cinema represent the clearest examples of the new aesthetic and political spaces of experiment (*Spielraum*), which Benjamin signified as emerging in the beginning of this century. They simultaneously include roughly two possibilities when discussed in political terms: to aestheticise politics or to politicise aesthetics.

In examining Benjamin's conceptions of time, work of art and history, I came to notice that the aspects of images and visuality are an essential and exceptional feature in Benjamin's thinking in general, and especially in his attempt to capture the experience of the present time[25]. The temporal experience of the *Now-time* concerns not only an intellectual, historical or political moment, but is also the beginning of an aesthetic and visual experience. The Now-time opens a moment of the experience in an historical and political sense, and this moment is also elaborated in terms of a work of art, and is a

condition of finding the Image-space (*Bildraum*) of action.

In the third part I shall turn towards the images as the object and material of the further question of temporal experience. However, my interpretation of Benjamin's concepts of images does not follow the canon of the Adorno-inspired critique, which mainly discusses Benjamin's concept of the dialectical image as it appears in the *Exposé for Das Passagen-Werk*. Instead, my point of approach finds the resonance in Anselm Haverkamp's view in which the 'image' is thought of from the viewpoint of time or history, and its specific legibility is problematised[26]. The concept of image, as it is combined with the question of temporality, also offers material for a theory of knowledge, as Benjamin's idea of truth includes both the aspects of visualisation and imagery. For this reason, I did not want to restrict my research to only textual material, but rather I also focused on images as inter-mediating temporal moments in thought, memory, documentation and dreams.

Due to the heterogeneity of the Benjamin's idea of the images as well as the way how they appear more implicitly than the moment of the Now in his texts, I have constituted the third part differently than the two preceding ones. However, the third part connects at least in two points of approach to the earlier sections. The first connection is to carry forth the interest in the conceptual approach, and the second is the reflection of temporality, here with regard to images. The elaborating of the Image-space offers a general framework of reflecting time, images and the chosen cinematic material. I shall detach myself from Benjaminian-exegesis, and move towards a conceptual praxis, in which I focus also on Deleuze's two books on *Cinema* (1:1997 / 2:1992). The reason for choosing a film as further material in this research emerged firstly from the experience of reading the *Kunstwerk* essay. However, the cinema also provides material for the discussion of time from another angle, namely, through the interaction between texts and images. In this, Benjamin calls film a specific temporal and spatial mode of experience, and an exemplary political power (PW e.g: 499-500, 658). The way in which cinema combines singular events in their spatial and temporal surroundings, and how it is at the same time considered to have the ability to transfer any temporal and spatial context, implies its possibility of arranging and rearranging the 'original' elements of which a film is made. I see that in this sense, constructing and editing a film is reminiscent of Benjamin's idea of history, which does not ignore the impact of the present time.

The work of art which is discussed here, and which I attempt to unfold in the spirit of art critique, is Chris Marker's short-film *La Jetée* (1964). I also make comparative remarks on Terry Gilliam's *Twelve Monkeys* (1995) which is inspired by Marker's script. *La Jetée* is viewed as a compact temporal journey, where the focus is on extended present experience. This present is approached through the way it offers images of time, merging with memories and wishes. *La Jetée* shows the images of present, past and future by opening the individual experience towards more collective temporal experiences, like death, dreaming and memory, which are unfolded from the chambers of mémoire involontaire

in order to overcome individual time-consciousness. As itself, it is a challenge to actualise the viewer's Now-time in every coming situation.

* * *

In reading Benjamin, I do not wish to follow the currently fashionable canon of Benjaminian interpretation, which uses fragments of his work in a slogan-like manner without elaborating on them in the context of the more extensive material of his work. The result of this is often a mixture of Benjamin, the secondary material and the current trends, such as postmodernism, which produces a large but often unclear montage[27].

It is evident that the questions concerning Benjamin's work have changed since the first commentaries. One specificity of this commentary is how it was constructed almost entirely on the posthumous reception, in which the first commentaries had a major impact on the reception[28]. The questioning of Benjamin's position between Marxism and Messianism was a typical point of approach for the first reception until around the 1970's[29]. This issue was closely connected to the dispute among the Frankfurt school, namely, whether Benjamin did or did not understand Marx correctly, and as a consequence of this dispute, Tiedemann wrote in his introduction for *Das Passagen-Werk*: "Es ist nicht schwierig, führt aber nicht sehr weit, Benjamin seine Mißverständnisse der Marxchen Theorie nachzuweisen." (PW: 28)[30] Aside from this, there is the discussion on Benjamin as a literary theorist, which has followed its own path throughout the decades, as well as the more recent interpretative reading which follows Paul de Man's 'Benjamin' [31].

The other wave in academic commentary originated in the beginning of the 1980s, and then crystallised into a search for Benjamin's position in the modern - post-modern debate[32]. Yet after the historical and ideological reading of Benjamin, many of the 1990's interpretations are more open to interdisciplinary issues, nevertheless only a few of them also manage to conserve Benjamin's original interdisciplinary thinking, or are able to navigate between the extensive amount of books on Benjamin.

The actualisation and re-reading of Benjamin is also connected to the idea that the Cartesian dualism in thinking has been an object of deconstruction during the second half of the 20th century. In the earlier interpretation, the missing dualistic opposition between ratio and irratio in Benjamin's thinking was conceived partly as magic-mystical, especially in later critical theory[33]. Since the new waves of interpretation, there have once again been interesting ways of finding roots in Benjamin's thinking other than those linked to the Enlightenment. These are, for instance, his connections to baroque and lately especially to the German Romantics. As it is also obvious in his critique of rationalism, Benjamin's thinking makes a tiger leap over the period of the Enlightenment, and moves towards the sources preceding and following the 18th century.

Finally, the difficulty of reading and writing about Benjamin is implied in his own writing, in which he is not interested to define his views. Nor does he

express his thinking in relation to the position of other thinkers or issues, regardless of whether they are criticised or supported by Benjamin. Writing on Benjamin is always necessarily an interpretation, and my contribution to this interpretation is outlined above in the conceptual method and the temporal question. As with any approach, I am aware of the associated dangers, since in most of the cases in which Benjamin is discussed in academic terms, the interpretation also demands heuristic thinking and intuition. In these terms, we might learn from a Talmudic tradition, in which doing research also means to 'caress'. The 'caress' does not necessarily know what it is seeking: disorder is as central as the order is to the research[34]. This disorder, as troubling as it may sound, is fruitful for research which not only aims at defining, but also at raising new questions. For myself, this basic question is crystallised into an intention to rediscover the cairologic approach to time.

I
BENJAMIN'S THESES ON THE "CONCEPT OF HISTORY" IN READING THE POLITICAL AND TIME

1. INTRODUCTION

L'histoire est comme Janus, elle a deux visages: qu'elle regarde
la passé ou le présent, elle voit les même choses
(Du Champ, Paris VI: 315. Quoted after Benjamin PW: 674)

Über den Begriff der Geschichte (1940) could be generally interpreted as outlining the historical situation of 1939/40.[1] The positions of the Marxist and Historical materialist, were focused on interpreting the political history between the World Wars, and the Theses were constructed primarily as a critique of the European Left before the World War II. As a response to the pact between Hitler and Stalin in 1939, Benjamin brought the Day of Judgement before the eyes of intellectuals (cf. 1940: VIII, XI-XIII). The pact was a shock, which made Benjamin sensitive in recognising the course that history had been leading up to, and this situation made him write the *Theses* as a 'revision' of historical materialism.

Benjamin deciphered the situation as resulting from the determining and phantasmagoric belief of historical and political *progress.* The action which he wished to rejuvenate was grounded in the idea of acknowledging the present situation. He attempted to show the historical situation through the discontinuous idea of time, not only with its deep relation to the past, but also with its relation to the present, as the actual present in Benjamin's view appeared as a constant catastrophe. The redemption of the situation, which would have follow-ed as a cause of the critical disruption of history, was not intended to remain only a metaphysical or a theological idea. On the contrary, it was outlined as shifting the viewpoint towards politics in a sense, in which politics was an idea immediately forced to take action in order to prohibit the continuity of the catastrophe[2].

In my interpretation I use the title *Theses,* which refers to Benjamin's method of presentation. Nevertheless, I find it important to note Benjamin's original title *Über den Begriff der Geschichte* (On the Concept of History), which was editorially replaced by *Geschichtsphilosophische Thesen.* The replacement, which was not done in the English translation, sometimes led the interpretations far from the actual focus of the *Theses,* as the original title focuses specifically on the *concept* of history as the target of study. Yet, the target is not real history, nor the various phenomena of history, but rather the ways of conceiving, reading and interpreting history[3].

The text was originally published in 1942 in *Walter Benjamin zum Gedächtnis,* edited by *Institut der Sozialforschung* in Los Angeles, after it had landed in Adorno's hands via Hannah Arendt. One version of the text was also in Benjamin's suitcase, which Adorno received from Dr. Domke in 1941, after Benjamin's death[4]. Although Benjamin mentioned the *Theses* in his letters to both Theodor and Gretel Adorno, neither of them actually saw a copy of them until 1941. It is also important to emphasise that Benjamin himself considered the text to be too incomplete for publication, as he began writing the first versions under difficult conditions, after his liberation from the refugee-camp he inhabited after the outbreak of the World War II. It is also possible that the last version of the Theses was written while he was travelling to Spain, probably in Lourdes or Marseilles, before he committed suicide in Port Pou, on the 27th of September, 1940[5].

However, the intellectual history of the *Theses* reaches further back than their actual context. In his letter to Gretel Adorno (April 1940, GS 1.3: 1226-7), Benjamin writes that the Theses were a collection of thoughts which he had kept private for 20 years, and that the war and its constellation was, as he wrote, the main motivation to express these ideas. One problematic point in the interpretation is that the thoughts were not only maintained in secret *(verwahrt)* from other people, they were partly hidden in his own thinking as well (..., *ja, verwahrt vor mir selber habe,* GS I.3: 226). The fact that he did not write the Theses down, but protected them in the background of his own thinking implies their reflection in his other later publications[6]. In fact, it is possible to find fragments of the Theses in many of his other works, such as *Eduard Fuchs, der Sammler und der Historiker, Das Passagen-Werk* or *Zentralpark.* The latter is the work which obviously dealt with Benjamin's thoughts of moving to New York.

According to Benjamin himself, the *Theses* are a reflection rather than an analysis (GS 1.3: 1226-1227). In keeping with this idea, I shall treat them as open reflections, and also include the draft which is published in *Gesammelte Schriften* 1.3 in my interpretation. In this case, however, I do not consider the work 'being in progress' in the *Theses* or in the *Kunstwerk,* disadvantageous to their interpretation. Rather, the open character of the reflections is advantageous in that it allows for the possibility of uncovering the specific temporal richness of Benjamin's concepts. Another possibility is to read the *Theses* as an expression of Benjamin's own intellectual situation. Rather than reading the text as a historico-political analysis, which was still not properly finished by

Benjamin himself, I unfold the *temporal problematic* underlined in the *Theses,* and here I especially focus on his temporalization of the concepts of *history* and *politics.* However, this is a task which is more easily formulated than practised: the text does not only aim at a revision of historical materialism, it also aims at a *revision of the temporality* of politics and history.

Altogether, the *Theses* state a conflict between the linear and non-linear concepts of time and history. This conflict was not merely theoretically or philosophically interesting, since the revolutionary character of Benjamin's claim of interruption implied demands for political action. Hence, this demand remained masked under the disguise of the critique, expressed by Benjamin's conceptual choices. The conflict sharpened in the dispute of the concept of history, and Benjamin's solution is implicitly ready: to offer his concept as a replacement for historical materialism. Benjamin's own materialism was a form, in which 'history' would have been removed from the Hegelian-Marxist concept, and would have obviously given more freedom than he considered was practised in his contemporary Marxism[7].

In the course of the *Theses,* Benjamin criticises the general meaning given to history during the 19th century German idealism. This "homogenous and empty idea of time" (1940: XIII, XIV) is an attribute of a temporal consciousness, which is characterised by temporal linearity. As I shall characterise it here, it is an echo of the Chronos, which breaks into temporal pieces and fragments during the moments of interference by Kairos[8]. Implicitly, Benjamin's aim is also to stress the impact that an historical understanding has on individual and political action. The new concept of history would construct a connection between writing and understanding history, and also between the ideas of politics and action. The concepts include elements from the background of Benjamin's thinking, such as the conception of history from a messianic or materialist angle. Yet, the ideas are dressed in new capes, as they are detached from their original intellectual and historical context, and the meanings are recreated in the Benjaminian constellation. The present time is conceived of as the opening which makes space for the recognition of the moment of the Now.

A further dilemma in reading the *Theses* stems from the difficulty of separating the method of approaching history from Benjamin's own way of commenting on historical events. The 17th Thesis offers, in Benjamin's own words, an especially important methodological point of departure, not only for the *Theses,* but also for his other work (GS 1.3: 1226-1227). This notation allows me to pay attention to his methodological approach on historiography, as well as on writing in general. The writing and understanding of history are intertwined in a reflecting relationship. This is further emphasised in Benjamin's fragmentary style of writing: the events as well as their commentaries are presented as open and infinite. This includes the chance to temporarily finalise one's interpretation in his or her own historical context.

The events commented on are conceived of as crystallisations of histories and times which lack any common continuity. From my viewpoint, Benjamin emphasises various angles from which to approach the matter within a particular text, whether he writes about 'history' or 'German tragic drama'. This met-

hod of writing is aimed at 'showing' events through the aforementioned principle of *Darstellung*, rather than through narration. Benjamin presents the object of study in a way in which its unifying concepts are disturbed, and he provokes his reader to reject the idea of the linearity of the text, and to approach it as separate pieces of thought, which, however, become bound together in the act of reading. Using Benjamin's own metaphor, I could say that his writing is like a kaleidoscopic presentation (cf. 1939d: 660), which transfers the same mosaic of thinking into multiple differences, and that this approach destroys the authority and closeness of the text, placing it in a reflective connection between the author and the reader.

Benjamin's thought on history includes the Janus-face, which derives from Western philosophical and theological traditions. Relying only on one approach does not bring us much hope[9]. The issues deriving from the sources of the Enlightenment and romanticism, which will become clearer when we examine Benjamin's *Kunstwerk* in the next part of this study, especially show that his thoughts were not mainly inspired by the 'light' of the Enlightenment, but rather by the 'darker' spaces of German baroque and early romanticism. For Benjamin, as he emphasises by quoting Du Champ, the history shows a Janus-face, which has a dualistic view of the past as well as of the present. Paradoxically, it appears to be the same, like nothing has changed, although, in fact, everything might actually have changed (PW: 674). This is the first side of the 'hell of modernity'.

2. CHESS BETWEEN MASTER AND SLAVE

I

> Bekanntlich soll es einen Automaten gegeben haben, der so konstruiert gewesen sei, daß er jeden Zug eines Schachspielers mit einem Gegenzuge erwidert habe, der ihm den Gewinn der Partie sicherte. Eine Puppe in türkischer Tracht, eine Wasserpfeife im Munde, saß vor dem Brett, das auf einem geräumigen Tisch aufruhte. Durch ein System von Spiegeln wurde die Illusion erweckt, dieser Tisch sei von allen Seiten durchsichtig. In Wahrheit saß ein buckliger Zwerg darin, der ein Meister im Schachspiel war und die Hand der Puppe an Schnüren lenkte. Zu dieser Apparatur kann man sich ein Gegenstück in der Philosophie vorstellen. Gewinnen soll immer die Puppe, die man ›historischen Materialismus‹ nennt. Sie kann es ohne weiteres mit jedem aufnehmen, wenn sie die Theologie in ihren Dienst nimmt, die heute bekanntlich klein und häßlich ist und sich ohnehin nicht darf blicken lassen.

The first Thesis provokes the question of whether a reader is in the position of master, or that of slave to a text. Benjamin opens the *Theses* with the description of a game of chess, in which the opponents are philosophy and the puppet called historical materialism. The reference to the game is reminiscent of Benjamin's daily chess parties with Bertolt Brecht in Denmark, as the daily game interrupted his writing praxis. However, the specific idea of the game in

the first Thesis is drawn from Edgar Allan Poe's *Maelzel's Chess Player*[10]. According to Poe's story, there is a dwarf, who is the primus motor of the game, hidden under the table. The dwarf, who is a master in the game of chess, is leading the puppet's hand. This idea becomes important to an interpretation of the Theses, because in Benjamin's view, the dwarf is supposed to assure that the materialist puppet will win the game[11]. "Gewinnen soll immer die Puppe, die man 'historischen Materialismus' nennt. Sie kann es ohne weiteres mit jedem aufnehmen, wenn sie die Theologie in ihren Dienst nimmt..." (1940: I)

As the dwarf represents theology, Benjamin sees 'Historical materialism' as winning the game against philosophy, especially if it is prepared to enlist the services of the theological dwarf. In the game, Benjamin sees the puppet as imitating the theological idea of the temporality of history. The game has begun, but what is it really all about? In the first reading it might seem that the game is about a confrontation between the named ideologies, or that it allegorically describes the mixing of the elements of theology, the theory of historical materialism and philosophy. However, after a careful reading of the published *Theses* and their drafts, the object of the game becomes more clear. The object of the game is named in Benjamin's title of the *Theses;* it is the struggle for the 'true' concept of history: "...als der Streit um den wahren Begriff der Geschichte wohl in Gestalt einer Partie zwischen zwei Partnern sich denken läßt." (GS 1.3: 1247)

The 'true' concept of history would, according to these quotes, be that of historical materialism. Still, while noticing this, one should remember that Benjamin constructed a 'new' concept of history as a revision of the historical materialist one. This is when he saw the Marxist praxis as becoming too restricted under the credo of orthodoxy. Benjamin's revision was made through an attempt to replace the continuous concept of history, which follows the tradition of the historical conception of Christian theology or German idealism. The dual meaning of Benjamin's concepts, which is roughly 'to name and to create', already becomes visible in the first Thesis. The reflection on the idea of history, and especially the interruption in temporal continuity, became so important because for Benjamin, this disruption seemed to be the only possible way to create the moment of critique of the 'catastrophic' historical situation.

Among the first readers who struggled with Benjamin's interpretation were Adorno and Horkheimer, who during the course of the 1930s had criticised Benjamin's thinking and writing for being too far removed from an orthodox Marxist or historical materialist position. Hannah Arendt notes how Brecht's supposed influence on Benjamin since the 1930's became a meeting point of showing the 'weaknesses' in Benjamin's thought, both for Adorno and for Benjamin's life long friend, Gershom Scholem. As Adorno took the position of the orthodox Marxist, Scholem criticised Benjamin for ignoring Judaism, which for Scholem was the only way towards positive progress in Benjamin's work (Br. 510). Scholem saw Benjamin's materialism as self-betrayal, his use of Marxist vocabulary as *krampfhaft,* and he saw all of this as having nothing to do with Benjamin's 'real' (*wirklich*) thinking. Benjamin's idea of *dialectics* seemed to be the only common point in Scholem's and Adorno's critiques. For both of

them, Benjamin's use of the concept of dialectics seemed to be far removed from that of dialectical materialism[12].

Benjamin's message of the chess opponents was further confused with his use of concepts, especially of those which merged with theological and materialist vocabularies. Examples of this are the concepts of redemption *Erlösung*, which at some points seems to describe the idea of Marxist revolution (1940: II), or redeemed mankind (*erlöste Menschheit*) which is parallel to the idea of classless society (*klassenlose Gesellschaft*, 1940: III). Of this we could assume that behind Benjamin's construction of materialism, lies reversed theology[13]. Undoubtedly, theology is a major, and finally an insoluble question for Benjamin. Additionally, Benjamin's own Marxism seems to be genuinely passionate, based on his studies on Marx and Lukács, his inspiration by the conviction of his friends, Asja Lacis and Bertolt Brecht, on the critique and friendship of Ernst Bloch, as well as on his involvement with and commentaries on the leftist art scene of the 1920s and 1930s in Germany, France or Russia.

It is no wonder that the message hidden in the complex arsenal of Benjaminian concepts lead interpretations of the *Theses* down various and heterogeneous paths. Also the object of interpretation, Benjamin's thinking itself appears in various colours. For instance, Jürgen Habermas' interpretation of Benjamin in his essay, *Bewußtmachende oder rettende Kritik*, claims that Benjamin wrote the first Thesis to suggest, that in order to construct the theory of experience, one should use the *historical materialism* in its service[14]. This supposition has lead many interpreters into almost opposite conclusions in their discussions of the content of the *Theses*. The first notion which weakens Habermas' claim is the fact that Benjamin wrote 'historical materialism' in quotation marks. Additionally, Benjamin referred to it as a puppet, not the ideology itself: ."..die Puppe, die man 'historischen Materialismus' nennt..." Additionally, this puppet was not intended to be taken 'in service' but the theology. These notions show, if nothing else, how complex and minimalist an author Benjamin is, as he stresses important aspects of his thought parenthetically, in foe culture 'of repression'. At the same time, the *Theses* form a critique of scientific, political and historical progress. Through the implicit critique, the concepts of history and politics become both temporalized and politicised.

In the first Thesis, perhaps growing tired of the dispute between the real and orthodox interpretations of any ideology, Benjamin begins to play his preferred game of chess. However, behind the game I see nothing characteristic of post-modern 'nothingness' or purposelessness. Instead, the figure leading the game appears as frighteningly fundamental, as it lurks in the guise of theology. In a wider context, the original image connects to the illusory nature of the secularisation-phenomenon: Benjamin shows how the theological idea of time, especially the Christian eschatological variation, is dressed in the capes of numerous philosophies. When the capes are removed, the one which remains on stage is the solvent of the game: theology.[15]

But which theology? Benjamin did not appear to be extremely religious, but his fascination with theology is apparent in his numerous discussions on it throughout the letters, as well as it appears by his inclusion of theological ideas

and concepts in his texts. In the *Theses,* theology refers generally to a theological conception of history, which separates the divine and eternal from human and finite time. If some nuances were derived from the inter-textual frame of the *Theses,* it would be apparent that the first Thesis shows an ironical figure of temporality, which could be compared to the later critique of progress as a secularised idea of paradise. Benjamin wished to make a distinction between the eternal idea of history embedded in German idealism, and intended to replace it with the more finite and profane one.

Despite his the references to the automate leading the game, I do not see the game as legitimising, but rather as questioning the deterministic understanding of an ideology or theology, which is tied to the path of an orthodox interpretation. In putting the partners in a dispute on the concept of history, Benjamin ironises the dispute and the aspect of truth of a real interpretation. In this sense, it is possible to read the beginning as a warning of the automatism lurking in any ideology when it is frozen in the disguise of 'the right' interpretation.

It is no doubt skilful to present the first Thesis as this kind of a puzzle, because it in turn determines the course of the entire text. Reading the *Theses* from the perspective of the playful post-modern theories, Benjamin's game is, as I shall point out, rich in meaning[16]. I consider the first Thesis as being reminiscent of a mirror which reflects the rest of the *Theses.* The more illusory or transparent the message, the more necessary it is to search for a new context in which to ponder the question of historical and political time. The reality is presented as a two-way mirror, in which the illusion of any one-sided reality is reversed through the metaphor of the dwarf sitting under the table and leading the game. This dwarf brings contingency and potential disruptions into history, as the mirror can be turned around a countless number of times. This is an ironic figure of Kairos. It confuses the positions of the writer and the reader, and makes it possible to reset the opponents in future games.

3. THE GLANCE OF FORTUNA

The second Thesis presents the idea of temporality portrayed through the concept of happiness (Glück)[17]. The Thesis itself is a mixture of issues derived from religion, materialism and the nostalgic feeling of potential happiness in moments which are almost already gone. It begins with a quotation from Rudolf Hermann Lotze:

> Zu den bemerkenswertesten Eigentümlichkeiten des menschlichen Gemüts, (...), gehört neben so vieler Selbstsucht im einzelnen die allgemeine Neidlosigkeit der Gegenwart gegen ihre Zukunft (Lotze, Mikrokosmos III, Leipzig 1864, 49: Benjamin, 1940: II; PW: 599-600).

What does the relationship between the present and its future mean? Interestingly, in the majority of Benjamin's works, the aspect of future remains absent, almost appearing as if it were uninteresting. The more specific question in the second Thesis becomes evident by asking *how* the present time forms the image of happiness which signifies coming times, or *how* the future is already *included* in the present? In this sense, the idea of envy, which otherwise illustrates the rather obscure image of the relationship between the present and future, becomes meaningful. It signifies the elements, such as how the present is constituted in the consciousness of the subject/actor, and which of these elements of understanding the present are projected towards the future.

The idea of the future as possibly arousing envy is included in, or potentially imbedded in the unrealised moment: "Glück, das Neid in uns erwecken könnte, gibt es nur in der Luft, die wir geatmet haben, mit Menschen, zu denen wir hätten reden, mit Frauen, die sich uns hätten geben können." (1940: II) The other one of Benjamin's rare ideas regarding the future can be seen in his quoting of Leibniz: "Le présent ist gros de l'avenir."[18] The aspect of the future seems to be thought of as being an immanent part of the present, where only the present action, if it is actualising this seed, can form the direction for the coming times.

Here I see Benjamin as rejecting a more common understanding of the future discussed as an utopia (*u-topos*), or the concept of the future as being temporally and spatially distinguished from the present. Consequently, Benjamin especially rejects the idea of the future found in utopian Marxism, as it is understood as being spatially different from the present, and also as being a 'goal'[19]. In utopian visions, the image of happiness as a future goal, is presented unattainable, emphasising its different *Zeitraum* from the present. Instead, when Benjamin discusses the topos of utopia, whether conceived of as theological or Marxist utopia, he seems to constitute it as being part of the extended present. From this viewpoint, it is possible to understand utopianism as stories of the present conditions, which legitimise its inclusion in the present *topos*, which is a further aspect of Benjamin's temporal turn. This turn is interesting, if it is reflected with Reinhart Koselleck's view on the temporalization of the utopia as its interference into the philosophy of history.

Koselleck positions this temporalization around the end of the 18th century, and he discusses it through Louis-Sébastien Mercier's novel *Das Jahr 2440* (1770), which Koselleck considers to be a slightly more modern utopia than many others produced after Mercier, and Carl Schmitt's *Die Buribunken* (1918)[20]. According to Koselleck, the first utopias were irrational, and their temporal content was conceived of mainly spatially, on the basis of the space of experience of the author. But later their status changed from spatial to temporal, and the author of a utopia became its producer. Mercier's utopia was a variation on the philosophy of progress, and the temporalization in this sense included the ideas of perfectionism and idealism. Schmitt's 'utopia', which Koselleck characterises as being negative, is, contrarily, a parody of historical progress. Through this negative utopia, Schmitt introduces an historical relativism, which applies especially to the background of the history of the concept of progress. In conclusion, Koselleck considers that the actual lesson of the utopia is that it is always different from historical time itself, and from how we would like to imagine its course[21].

Benjamin's view on the utopia proceeds neither positively nor negatively along the path of the Enlightenment philosophy. He also ignores the idea of the future for another reason, which marks an important distinction between the Christian and Jewish traditions. If the future cannot be visualised during the present, there must be a distinguishing factor which separates the present from the potential futuristic qualities of the present time. In Benjamin's writing, this factor is described through the concept of redemption (*Erlösung*). This means that there is no chronologically understandable distance between the present and redemption. Instead, the distance is created qualitatively, especially through narratives or 'stories' creating the future but still attached to the present. As I interpret the temporal idea in the *Theses* as cairological instead of chronological, the relation between present and future is understood as temporal, but the distance between these aspects varies depending on the question posed above: of which present elements is the future constituted, and how is it constituted? For Benjamin, the future constitution includes the elementary structure of the *Erlösung* – or the so called messianic element of time[22].

As Benjamin refers to the religious origins of the understanding of happiness, this leads us to think further about the temporal nature of redemption, within the context of its theological aspects, especially in its Jewish messianic form. According to Gershom Scholem, the Christian and Jewish ideas of messianism are significantly different from each other. Jewish messianism includes the idea of redemption as happening openly on the 'stage of history', whereas the Christian idea of redemption is thought to happen in the sphere of the invisible, in the unique soul of a person. This transfer from the outer towards the inner sphere of redemption in Christendom was primarily expressed by Augustine's *De civitate Dei* [23]. However, following Scholem, in Jewish messianism, everything that is interior must be expressed in that which is exterior, and thus the creative power of each divine potentiality must be fully actualised[24]. Scholem examines the messianistic idea especially in Rabbian Judaism (*rabbianisches Judentum*) which he sees being in a polemical conflict with Christian Messianism. Rabbian Judaism includes three different principles of interpretation:

1. *Conservative* direction attempts to conserve that which already exists. In this interpretation, the Law *(Gesetz)* determines the way of life of Jewish people. This constructs the frames in which the life in the light of Offenbarung is possible.

2. *Restorative* direction aims at re-presentation (Wiederherstellung) of the past. The restorative doctrine combines the historical fantasy with the memory of the nation. The hope here is set in the past, which is reminiscent of Benjamin's idea of the 'backwards prophesy' (1940: VII).

3. *Utopian* principle that forces the direction forward, and which gains the dynamism of messianism from the vision of the future. It presupposes a world which had never existed. In the messianic utopia lies also the anarchical element, which includes antinomic possibilities, latent in restorative interpretation. The contradictory position between the restorative and utopian (radical) elements when the Torah is discussed, brings the element of uncertainty of the position of *Halacha* (the law) into Messianism.

The first sphere does not offer entry for the Messiah, but the two others do. Additionally, the restorative and utopian moments are deeply bound to one another[25]. If we follow Scholem's distinction, Benjamin's Judaism seems to come close to the restorative aspect, and for instance Bloch's standpoint is that of the utopian Messianism. The utopianism emphasises the totally new, which has elements of the old, but is not conceived of as the actual past. Moreover, these are dreamlike elements[26]. The distinction shows, although very roughly, the heterogeneity of the Jewish Messianic tradition. Therefore, if one wishes to examine Benjamin's thought within Jewish messianism, the pluralism of the 'doctrine' must be carefully studied[27].

Following Scholem further, the idea of redemption in Jewish Messianism is not conceived of as following a logical historical sequence or as being a conse-

quence of history. Moreover, the relation between history and redemption lacks the aspect of mediation (*übergangslosigkeit*). This implies a lack of historical linearity, caused by the rupture which redemption creates between the previous and future histories. The idea of an apocalypse does not recognise history as being a form of progress moving towards redemption; on the contrary, it renders the procedure of linear time towards the future, impossible. If the element of redemption is transferred to history, it means that there will be an *inevitable break in history*. This break is structurally essential, and it changes the autonomy of the Christian/rational concept of history. This point of approach also highlights an important difference to the idea of history in the form of Christian (Augustinian) sense, and further secularises the concept of linear history after the Enlightenment[28].

This idea of disruption in history, which Benjamin insistently includes in his thinking, also explains the element of redemption in his philosophy of history. The Messianic framework introduces the motives for understanding history through something other than its linear sequence. This disruption creates a potential space, from which the course of the historical time might be approached critically, from the perspective of the Now. In other words, the rupture constructs the moment in which a philosophical critique of history becomes possible. The historical agent is shown as being in the position to constitute the idea of infinite history, in which its elements are brought together as a critique, or as an object of redemption[29]. Here, I regard the Jewish idea of restoration not as dogmatic, but as a catalyst for reflection. In this sense, Benjamin returns to the idea of messianic temporality, which emphasises the production of time. It is "as if the world existed and did not exist at the same time, perpetually spilling away, re-creating every instant"[30].

As the previous history is described as collapsing as a result of its non-linearity (*übergangslosigkeit*), Benjamin considers history as becoming politicised through the actualisation of the present (cf. PW: 490-491). The moment of redemption is understood as happening spontaneously, which stresses the importance of being in a state of alertness in the present. This existential condition is embedded in the idea of *Geistesgegenwart*, especially in the draft version of the *Theses* (GS 1.3: 1243-44):

> Die Geistesgegenwart als politische Kategorie kommt auf großartige Weise in diesen Worten Turgots zu ihrem Recht: "Avant que nous ayons appris que les choses sont dans une situation déterminée, elles ont déja changé plusieurs fois. Ainsi nous apercevons toujours les événements trop tard, et la politique a toujours besoin de prévoir, pour ainsi dire, le présent." (Turgot, *Oeuvres* II, 1944: 673. Quoted after Benjamin PW: 598).

This mental presence emphasises the ability to intuitively prophesise on the present, not through the past, but from the perspective of the present. The moment of politicisation would offer a 'real' historical materialist the possibility of taking a leading role in the playing out of historical events. The action in this case might have an ideal inspired by Fourier, Marx, Luxemburg or the sur-

realist communist artists[31]. It becomes possible to redeem the past because, for Benjamin, nothing is absolutely in the past. In the second Thesis this fact becomes evident through the temporal index, in which he discusses the past: "Die Vergangenheit führt einen zeitlichen Index mit, durch den sie auf die Erlösung verwiesen wird." (1940: II) Here, it is notable that the past is not seen as identical with time itself, and the temporal index attached to the past is also possible to experience in the present through redemption. Additionally, there are many of these supposed temporal indexes which confront one another in various concepts of time, and which create temporal differences. Here, the ways in which it becomes possible to approach the past appear through various states of experience. How the past becomes present is, later in the *Theses*, referred to as an 'act of recognition'.

Although the difference between the concepts of 'past' and 'time' do not play any important part in this Thesis, they might contribute to further speculation on the understanding of the image of happiness (*Glück*), which is signified (*tingiert*) through time, and which is "indissolubly bound up with the *image* of redemption"[32]. The image of happiness is inseparable from the concept of time itself, which distinguishes Benjamin's conception of the future from the other temporalized concepts.

For example, the critique of the future as a capitalist phantasmagoria was expressed especially in Benjamin's *Exposé* for *Das Passagen-Werk*. However, in the *Exposé*, the temporal content of the concepts appear somewhat less distinguished than it was in most of the fragments of the book itself. For instance, the discussion of the idea of the new (*die Neue, die Neuigkeit*) and the ideas of the dream from the *Exposé*, gain more specific critical meaning in, for example, the Konvolut K [*Traumstadt und Traumhaus...*] or N [*Erkenntnistheoretisches*]. This implies that reading the *Exposé* as a summary of the content of the book is not an approach which will likely yield success. The fact that the book was written throughout the years since 1927, also shows that it is rather impossible to construct a chronology in-between the fragments of the text or attempt to approach it through this constructed order.

However, after reading Benjamin's Theses, it is easier to position the examples of other temporal or imaginary concepts he uses in *Das Passagen-Werk*, like the mentioned concept of *phantasmagoria*. In phantasmagoria, the elements of past and present are combined and projected on to the "hope of luck that will happen in the future". Benjamin uses the idea of phantasmagoria in describing and criticising the dreams and desires of the German bourgeois and the commodity of the 19th century. He also distinguishes the phantasmagoria of space, which is the space of the *Flaneur*, and which corresponds to the phantasmagoria of the time of gamblers, in which the game transforms time into a drug (PW: 57).

The other important temporal image, which is connected to phantasmagoria and describes hallucination and illumination, is the question of dreams and dream-images as projecting the image of future. In dreams, we are supposed to see future epochs become true, as Benjamin quotes Michelet in the 1935 *Exposé: chaque époque rêve la suivante* (PW: 46). In this, the dream images of the

new are mixed with old or past images. However, in order to be realised as a dream, any dream of the past must include an awakening, or an act of awakening. One side cannot be understood without the other, and Benjamin also used awakening as a metaphor for a *political* awakening. Altogether, Benjamin's idea here was to construct a history of Paris, in order to awaken the present from this mythical dream of the past century.

If it is possible to construct an image (of the future) that does not have the elements of the present or past, how then can we construct the future of, as yet, non-existent material? The mixture forms a third image of the future, a wish projected towards the future (*Wunschbilder*, PW: 46-47)[33]. These images are, according to Benjamin, constructed against the close past (*Jüngstvergangene*). Here, the imaginary world is characterised as a fantasy reaching back to the ur-past (PW: 47)[34]. These wish-images, and also the utopian images presented in the versions of *Das Passagen-Werk*, still remain in the sphere of the mythical, since they reach back to the ur-past and are projected towards the future without acknowledgement (awakening) in the present. This present would be combined with the act of reaching into the past, in order to 'fulfil' some of the images through redemption. Without redemption, the mythical state is continuous, and the political 'dialectics' are one way of actualising the awakening from the mythical state. Following Benjamin's metaphors, if the dream turns towards awakening, it creates a perspective on the present, which interrupts the state of dreaming, and leads the course of time in the desired direction (see PW, *Frühe Entwurfe*: 1057-1058).

In the dream-image, the aesthetic and political experiences are also potentially connected in a way which disturbs the dichotomy between rational and irrational. Dreams, fantasies or phantasms are connected to sexual or erotic desire, and are strongly present in the sight of a desired object. This aspect of the profane is essentially signified in the thought of potentiality which is almost already lost. In the second Thesis, the potential is projected in the idea of women "who could have given themselves, and in people that we might have met". The sudden glance at the possibility of that which was already gone as it had once appeared, is also included in Benjamin's famous passage about Baudelaire's poem *A une passante*[35]. In Baudelaire's poem, the Kairos is crystallised in the eyes of the crowd: a momentary glance from the eyes of a woman, perceived by a male onlooker, eyes meeting each other full of wonderful promises and possibilities, include all that is essential to what one can tell about the luck to come, or happiness just passed by.

4. THE MOMENT OF KAIROS

Although above I presented the Jewish messianic idea of Erlösung in order to illuminate the background of Benjamin's temporal idea of happiness, it is not accurate to treat his texts as having been written solely from a Jewish perspective. It is obvious that varying, and often also contrasting traditions cross his thought. With regard to the temporal aspect Kairos, I could also follow the thoughts of Paul Tillich, who was a leader of the Christian religious socialists, the so-called *Kairos-Kreis*. It is a known fact that Benjamin followed Tillich's influence in Germany during the 1920s, and had personal contact with him in the later 1930s[36].

As Tillich criticises the time concepts in the old Testament, he contrasts the idea of the Kairos, which means the right or fulfilled time, against the Chronos, which signifies the formal and eternal ideas of time. In Tillich's writing, as in Benjamin's, time, signified by the Chronos, is described as "homogeneous and empty" (cf. 1940: XIII, XIV, Anhang A, B). The combination of *Erlösung* and the Christian Kairos are the significant elements in the creation of the background for the need to establish a new concept of time that is based not solely on expectation, but also on experience. In this sense I interpret that the collision between Jewish and Christian traditions result in the discovery of the essential moment of Now, which Benjamin thematizes as the *Jetztzeit*.

Tillich approaches the Christian conception of time by distinguishing the moment of Kairos, as opposing the universal idea of time and history, which is conceptualised as Chronos[37]. For Tillich, the specific 'emptiness' of the Christian conception of time seems to be crystallised in the idea of rejecting destiny (*Schicksal*). The destiny is characterised through the figures of Chronos and Kairos in which Chronos signifies the idea of eternal truth and asceticism. The reason for eliminating the impact of destiny is embedded in its sudden and 'cairotic' appearance which is interpreted as demonic, for instance, in Greek Tragedy, religion and mysteries. The attempt to eliminate the contingent aspects of time, leads gradually to 'asceticism', in which the time is abstracted

from individual experience, fears, desires and destiny. "Askese: nicht etwa von den geistigen Dingen, sondern von dem Zeitschicksal; und Eros: nicht etwa nach der schöpferischen Lebenstiefe, sondern nach der reinen Form, dem Logos."[38]

This elimination of contingency is what Tillich considers to be the first moment of 'rationalisation'. As a consequence, cairologic possibilities, as well as their uncontrollable content, simultaneously became excluded from the Christian concept of time. As only God can overcome the demonic, the problem of destiny becomes transferred from the human to the eternal idea of time. This is a topic which was repeated in the Enlightenment critique of the baroque *irratio,* in which the Ratio is thought of as overcoming the demonic (*Entdemonisierung*)[39]

Attempting to fulfil time with the contents that were once already eliminated is a matter of having to accept more profane ideas, such as Eros, as signifying human temporality. According to Tillich, the idea of asceticism should also concern the question of how to deal with 'destiny' and creativity, and not only with the Logos. Here, Tillich's idea of an acknowledging subject is tied to the theories of knowledge and time as well as to their temporality. If the truth is be thought mainly in eternal categories of time, this 'truth' cannot be conceived of as an object of human thought. As a result, the position of the thinking individual becomes excluded from the eternal Chronos. Tillich's conception of the Kairos as being signified through the Logos opens up the space in which human destiny creates a fracture in Chronos-time and in which the acknowledgement of the 'truth' is possible.

For Tillich, the Logos is present and existent in thinking itself, although in every act of thinking lies the 'secret' condition of unconditional truth (Kairos). Tillich sees the mission of philosophy as combining the aspects of Kairos and Logos. Here, the Logos should be included in Kairos as characterising time as the fulfilment of truth found also in destiny: "die Zeitenfülle, die Wahrheit in das Schicksal der Existenz."[40] Yet the task of including Logos into the moment of Kairos is problematic. There is only one possible condition for asceticism, and that is the acknowledgement of the subject as timeless (*zeitlos*). In this sense the subject could be thought of as lacking the qualitative attributes of time and would be signified as an *akairos.* Yet the idea of timeless subjectivity is in itself contradictory.

In Benjamin's earlier work on the history of philosophy, the idea of destiny is expressed in temporal terms as follows: "Die Zeit des Schicksals ist die Zeit, die jederzeit gleichzeitig (nicht gegenwärtig) gemacht werden kann. Sie steht unter der Ordnung der Schuld, die in ihr den Zusammenhang bestimmt, Sie ist eine unselbstständige Zeit und es gibt in ihr weder Gegenwart noch Vergangenheit noch Zukunft." (fr. 64, GS VI: 91) Benjamin sees the time of destiny as detached from the common categorisations of the present, past or future. In these terms, the present, including the Kairos, cannot be controlled through chronologically understood time, based on these temporal dimensions. Here, it is possible to find another reason for the Chronos to 'break apart' in the moment of the interference of the Kairos.

The other perspective from which Tillich attempts to combine the Kairos and the Logos is also interesting in interpreting Benjamin, since Tillich sees the 'triumph' of Christianity as resulting from the phenomenon of *Entdemonisierung*, which implies that philosophy would become a part of theology[41]. This idea relates to, although clearly contradicts, Benjamin's allusion in the first Thesis. Reflecting this background, Benjamin's suggestion of the construction of an historical concept which would revise the earlier idealistic Christian or German concepts, can also be understood as a revision of Christian temporal idea of history. Benjamin's implicit critique stresses the lack of criticism towards the temporal structure of history, especially the ignorance of the Christian origins in Hegelian *Weltgeschichte*.

For Benjamin, the Christian idea of guilt (*Schuld*) is an historical totality consisting of a causal relation which is transferred to profane history as social guilt (GS VI: 92)[42]. The influence of the guilt/sin (*Schuld*) and reconciliation (Sühne), which are embedded in Christianity, paradoxically shifted back towards the earlier history of capitalism. As Benjamin claims in his early fragment on *Kapitalismus als Religion* (1921), Christianity not only favoured the development of history, but also transformed itself into capitalism (1921c: 100). In this claim, Benjamin expanded on Weber's and Troeltsche's claims of Protestantism as contributing to the emergence of capitalism[43].

Benjamin identifies three characteristics of 'capitalism as a religion'. The first is that capitalism is religion without a dogma, the second, that it is a cult whose celebration is permanent, and the third is that capitalism is mainly a cult, which bestows guilt as opposed to removing it: "Der Kapitalismus ist vermutlich der erste Fall eines nicht entsühnenden sondern verschuldenden Kultus." (1921c: 100) There is also a fourth characteristic of capitalism, which is combined with the Nietzschean ethos of the *Übermensch*, which for Benjamin is the attempted task of capitalist religion. In this, Benjamin modifies Nietzsche further: God is not dead, but rather is embedded in the destiny of the people. However, according to Benjamin, capitalism as religion, as is the case when destiny is transformed into the social, cannot possibly reach the reformation of the human being (*Sein*), but rather leads to its destruction (1921c: 101).

Combining the issues discussed above, it becomes clear that the moment of Kairos combines the elements from Jewish messianism and the critique of Christian progressive and linear conception of history. Benjaminian redemption should create a situation in which temporality and happiness are within the reach of the individual as opposed to sustaining the idea of a temporally homogenous history. Jewish messianism includes the idea of redemption as occurring openly on the 'stage of history', where it also ruptures the previous understanding of history. This rupture is structurally essential in understanding the temporality of Benjamin's concept of history, and it also shows an alternative to the Christian, or rational concept of history. This follows the way in which, for example, Tillich approaches the Christian conception of time by distinguishing the moment of Kairos as particularly opposing the universal idea of time as Chronos. This interplay, which brings the issues of redemption and Kairos into individual reach, can also be described by Benjamin's concept of

Geistesgegenwart. It shifts from an historical-religious towards a political setting, and this moment of politicisation offers the historical materialist the sphere in which he or she can become an actor in historical events.

5. THE PROBLEM OF WRITING HISTORY

III

Der Chronist, welcher die Ereignisse hererzählt, ohne große und kleine zu unterscheiden, trägt damit der Wahrheit Rechnung, daß nichts was sich jemals ereignet hat, für die Geschichte verloren zu geben ist. Freilich fällt erst der erlösten Menschheit ihre Vergangenheit vollauf zu. Das will sagen: erst der erlösten Menschheit ist ihre Vergangenheit in jedem ihrer Momente zitierbar geworden. Jeder ihrer gelebten Augenblicke wird zu einer citation à l'ordre du jour – welcher Tag eben der jüngste ist.

As the second Thesis reflects the Kairos, the third offers a glimpse into the time of Chronos, which is metaphorised by an 'Historian' as a Chronicle. In his earlier work, Benjamin describes the Chronist in medieval terms: "In so fern nämlich der jüngste Tag der Schluß jener Chroniken ist, wie das Ende des Dramas der Welt, so hängt die Christliche Geschichtsschreibung freilich mit dem christlichen Schauspiel zusammen, und es kommt hier daruf an, die Äußerungen der Chronikschreiber zu beachten, welche den Zusammenhang deutlich angeben." (1925: 256) The juxtaposition of the Christian writing of history as a chronicle in the way Benjamin emphasises in the *Theses*, enhances the differences between the Jewish and Christian temporal ideas in these terms (see further, 1925: 257-258). This critique applies not only to the 'historicist' way of writing history, but dates back to the Christian understanding of the course of history, in which the temporal differences between the Christian and Jewish perspectives is again emphasised44. Here, Benjamin questions the met-

hod of writing or *mediating* history, and he makes a distinction between writing an historical chronicle and 'real' writing of history, which is a negation of the chronicle. Benjamin outlines the differences between these two arts of historiography by emphasising the reliance on written facts in the principle of chronicle writing, although in his view the chronist recites events *(hererzählt)* without distinguishing between major and minor events (1940: III).

The question of *how* to represent historical time is also included in a critique of historical chronicling. Benjamin is attempting to establish the relationship between the concept of history and the concept of time, as he sees the chronicle as without making the distinction between large and small scale events, he interprets this as becoming transferred into the homogeneous concept of time. For Benjamin, historical writing always involves the problem of presenting reality through selection, which is what makes it a perspectivist science in the Nietzschean sense. An important idea on time, which Benjamin expands on in his discussion of dialectical images, is his distinction between the 'past' in general (*Vergangenheit*) and past moments (*Momente*). Past *moments* should be documented in an historical text, image or memory, since the past can never be present in a single image as a general concept. Instead, past moments should be interpreted through an image, text-fragment or notion, which thus negates the possibility of the past being represented as 'it really was'.

In my discussion of the second Thesis above, I noted that Benjamin forms an idea on the past, including remarks about its temporal index, which is not identical to 'time'. The temporal *index* that is included in the past seems to be a sphere which differs from the chronological understanding of the course of time. It also characterises the difference between the past in general and how it is conceived though the *Erlösung*. This temporality is one point of departure, in which the correlation between historical space and time is also established (cf. GS VI: 90). In a Benjaminian sense, the work of an historian is not seen as the task of putting events in chronological order, but rather presupposes or creates a particular perspective of specific historical events, which is possible to interpret in any moment anew.

Benjamin again presents his view on 'real' history through his utilisation of theological vocabulary. The materialisation of a redeemed mankind, whose history can be quoted in its entirety, is presented here as occurring as a result of the Judgement Day. While Benjamin articulates his idea quite fluently, I single out one of the sentences from the draft of the Thesis in order to locate some temporal meaning in the theological figures and their relation to each other: "Der Jüngste Tag ist eine rückwärts gewandte Gegen-wart." (GS I.3: 1232)

By combining the aspects of the previous issues, the following temporal image emerges. The first notion of the temporality of Judgement Day can be examined through Scholem's interpretation of its Jewish conception, as it stands in opposition to the Christian idea. As I discussed above, redemption in the Jewish messianism includes a potentiality that it occurs in the present, on the 'open stage of history'[45]. Here, Benjamin shows Judgement Day as it appears in the present, but reverses it as he further detaches himself from the future-oriented Christian image of time. This reversed image is repeated again in the

ninth Thesis, in which Benjamin presents the image of *Angelus Novus* as an angel who has turned its back on the future. In these reversed metaphors, and before the vision, only the past remains to be 'seen'.

The temporal ideas, which metaphorise the eternal and absolute conceptions of time, suddenly become thrust into the present with the appearance of the *Angelus*. This event creates a further moment of disruption in the linear understanding of time. This confrontation leads to the "emancipation" of the near future by showing in a momentary view that it is possible for an individual to break from the linearity of time through an action which is directed backwards as opposed to forward, and the idea confuses further the chronological 'order' between past, present and future. Instead of the presupposed linearity, several indexes between the past and present moments could be introduced.

The reversibility of time also destroys one of the preconditions of the causality of actions. This idea is directly connected to the second Thesis, in which the image of happiness is brought from its eternal unreachable existence to the concrete part of the present[46]. In the Theses, Benjamin does not suppose a chronologically understood distance between the present and redemption, as distance is created qualitatively, especially through narratives or 'stories', which create the future, but are still attached to the present. This becomes evident through the idea of discussing the past, which carries a temporal index within itself. There are also hypothetically many temporal indexes which confront each other in various concepts of time and which also create further temporal differences in the concepts of past and present. The main motive for this reversed image seems to be that history should stop repeating itself, or that the perception of history might come to an 'awakening' through recognising its temporal diversity.

6. ON TEXT AND QUOTATION

In reconstructing Benjamin's ideas on historical time, these repetitive and essential questions come up: how and of what elements is history 'composed', who is the composer and how is it possible to reach past events in a contemporary situation? Taking the query to another layer, I shall pay attention to the way how Benjamin understand history as textual, and composed, for instance, of quotations.

Ralf Konersmann pays attention to Benjamin's notions on quotation in the third Thesis[47]: "Jeder ihrer *(der erlösten Menscheit, kl)* gelebten Augenblicke wird zu einer citation a l'ordre du jour – welcher Tag eben der jüngste ist." (1940: III) Although the sentence is very short, Konersmann's interpretation of it seems to be fertile in considering Benjamin's perspective on the text. In the quote, the past actualises itself authentically. This is an important thought in the context of a Benjaminian approach to historiography, especially as the writing of history with the interplay of quotations and commentaries is practised in his *Das Passagen-Werk*. The quotation is one element, which 'acts' as an historical testimony in coming present times. In reading a quote instead of an interpretation, the temporal space between past and present vanishes. If a quotation is taken purely as an historical document without the interpretations of previous readers, it appears to reflect the specific moment of the situation. The quotation also represents the temporal nature of historical events better than interpretations, as every interpretation includes aspects of the time in which it is made. As such, a quote forms a thesis or antithesis in the present reading situation, and it combines the aspects of the historico-philosophical, political and messianic[48].

If 'history' is approached as being composed of quotations, its linguistic dimension becomes important. In fact, Benjamin sees a text as a dimension of reality which can be read like a book: "Die Rede vom Buch der Natur weist darauf hin, daß man das Wirkliche wie einen Text lesen kann. So soll es hier

mit der Wirklichkeit des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts gehalten werden. Wir schlagen das Buch des Geschehenen aus." (PW: 580)

If reality is understood as a network compared to a text, history might also appear as a textual network (*textum=Gewebe*), which can be torn apart and become webbed together again[49]. That makes the text important, but yet not the only material of experience. It is worth noting that Benjamin also connects the way of experiencing 'reality' with vision, which refer either to concrete images or to the visual aspect of thinking itself (thought-images-*Denkbilder*). Consequently, historical material is not only conceived of as written and readable textually, but is also "readable as an image"[50]. The images provide a sphere in Benjamin's work, which combines the ideas of time and its historical representation, and also the historical and bodily aspects[51].

In his article *Gesichtsbilder – Geschichtsbilder*, Peter Krumme compares the Benjaminian method of reading (and method of reading Benjamin) to searching for traces[52]. Krumme accurately notes that one cannot "read Benjamin from beginning to end", but instead the reader must interpret his images of thought, which are spread throughout his various texts. From this point of view, Benjamin seems to practise his own method of writing history while simultaneously problematising the process of reading. This provides the interpreter with this dualistic idea to struggle with: both the freedom and the difficulty of writing on Benjamin is that the texts and their contents are so implicitly connected to each other, and in most of the cases, the reading must proceed vertically as much as horizontally.

Adding more problems to read Benjamin, Konersmann emphasises the relativity of Benjamin's concept of reality, and stresses that he writes about the relations *between* things, rather than *about* things or phenomena themselves[53]. Reality may be approached only through the ways in which it is presented, and every present situation creates its own interpretation and presentation of the past. However, rather than viewing this as problematic, I see it as a fruitful point, which makes the connections between Benjamin's fragments especially interesting. Benjamin relativizes the limits between text and image, as well as he confuses between the limits of seeing, reading and thinking. As Benjamin seems to be inspired to confuse these limits, he also destroys the causality between them, and re-constitutes the relations from the point of the limit or the unknown. Implicitly, Benjamin's thinking questions the Cartesian dichotomies between body and mind, as well as the Kantian distinctions between understanding and sensibility. The different aspects are seen as different dimensions of 'reality', which is not singular but multiple. In other words, the representations, images and texts of the past or present are considered as being 'splinters of reality', which, when put together in new configurations, form images that are attached to reality and that offer new viewpoints on it.

Also Benjamin's mimetic approach to phenomena is part of the process which challenges the logistic-linear way of understanding. In the mimetic presentation, things seem, at first, not to be causally connected. Yet, through the textual interplay, the non-causal 'inner' connections of phenomena become apparent[54]. The reading of these mimetic presentations is reminiscent of the

experience of modern art, reading a modern novel (*nouveau roman*), or viewing the non-linearly proceeding film, in which the obvious connection between different parts, sections or paragraphs is temporally destroyed. Furthermore, the reading of quotations is reminiscent of the act of collecting traces, in which the objects of collection have no more common or historical value like in the 'official writing of history', but they are reminders of the arbitrary collection of experiences. Yet, in the new collection 'of history', arbitrariness gains its meaning and the events create other and previously unknown connections to each other.

The idea of destruction of the linearity is also embedded in language itself. According to Alexander Düttmann, who emphasises Benjamin's 1916 theory of language in a political connotation, Benjamin conceives of a genealogical order of language, which proceeds from a disruptive event. The particularity of this event is attached to a rupture, which introduces discontinuity into a language[55]. As language includes both the aspects of interruption and the creation of tradition, it becomes an effective political medium, if it is used as such. In other words, the ideas of political action and disruption are embedded in language and its multiple system of signs, in which the names and signifiers can also be symbolically transferred in order to point out breaches in the conventional understanding of the language, as Benjamin's complex method of writing and playing with concepts exhibits.

At this point we come back to the question about the border between text and reality. If one can "read reality like a text", then the line between the two appears to become relativized. Interrupting the act of reading is compared to interrupting a dream through the act of awaking, and for Benjamin, every historical presentation should begin in this Proustian way. Reading or seeing the text without introducing a subjective experience into it is comparable to a dream state, which is composed of time but lacking in experiences or moments of Kairos.

7. DANGERS IN TRANSFERRING THE TRADITION

V

Das wahre Bild der Vergangenheit *huscht* vorbei. Nur als Bild, das auf Nimmerwiedersehen im Augenblick seiner Erkennbarkeit eben aufblitzt, ist die Vergangenheit festzuhalten. »Die Wahrheit wird uns nicht davonlaufen« – dieses Wort, das von Gottfried Keller stammt, bezeichnet im Geschichtsbild des Historismus genau die Stelle, an der es vom historischen Materialismus durchschlagen wird. Denn es ist ein unwiederbringliches Bild der Vergangenheit, das mit jeder Gegenwart zu verschwinden droht, die sich nicht als in ihm gemeint erkannte.

The fifth Thesis begins with the critique of historicism (Historismus), and it combines the earlier critique of the chronicle with the critique of the linear understanding of history. Benjamin attacks historicism because it aims at catching the "real image" of history. However, a critique of the 'real' is not based on doubting the authenticity of historical facts, but on paying attention to the temporal nature of the concept of historical truth.

Firstly, Benjamin opposes Gottfried Keller's idea of a truth which "will not run away from us" (*Die Wahrheit wird uns nicht davonlaufen*) to his own claim on a true image of the past as just passing by (*Das wahre Bild der Vergangenheit huscht vorbei*). The difference between the conceptions lies in the dynamics between history and an individual. Benjamin criticises the idea of understanding history from a historicist perspective, which is culminated in seeing the *historical* situation as primary, or as guiding the individual actors. Benjamin

reverses this scenario by making the individual actor the central figure, who reflects the character of historical knowledge and its truthfulness in the altering temporal contexts. According to the method of *Das Passagen-Werk*, Benjamin's idea to represent/perform (*Darstellen*) history would explicitly lead to the destruction of the idea of the stability of truth in Kellerian sense (PW: 579). The historical image (Bild) contains something essential in approaching the truth of the past, but the puzzle is far from simple; how can one grasp time or the true image of time that appears only as "flashing and actual"? I shall come back to this problem in the next chapter on *Conceptualising the Images of Past.*

Secondly, Benjamin quotes Ranke's view on writing history through 'registering' the events as they actually happened (*wie es denn eigentlich gewesen ist*)[56]. This quote of Ranke is not accurately copied, and Benjamin left out the reference to the original source, probably considering it as obvious. As his own idea of the meaning of the historiography, Benjamin suggests to hold on to a memory as it flashes up (*aufblitzen*) at a moment of danger: "Dem historischen Materialismus geht es darum, ein Bild der Vergangenheit festzuhalten, wie es sich im Augenblick der Gefahr dem historischen Subjekt unversehens einstellt. Die Gefahr droht sowohl dem Bestand der Tradition wie ihren Empfängern. Für beide ist sie ein und dieselbe: sich im Werkzeug der herrschenden Klasse herzugeben." (1940: VI)

The object of the critique is the way, in which the historicist perspective emphasises the whole world as being history. This could be highlighted through Friedrich Meinecke, according to whom the basic idea of historicism is the belief in the parallel development of life and history. The direction of the historical development and progress was seen as determined and comparable to the development of human nature. This 'evolutionary history' is comparable to human biological development. The view did become more problematic as the direction of the development became questionable[57], and the historicism, which intended to overcome historical relativism, was itself later labelled as relativist.

As Koselleck notes, the axiom of historicism contains the idea that everything is unique and that history is in a constant state of development, which is reflective of the experience after the French or industrial revolution. During the *Neuzeit*, the dynamics of history seemed increasingly to change, and Koselleck refers to this as acceleration (*Beschleunigung*). The *Neuzeit* also began a transformation in the structure of experience (*Erfahrungswandel*). The change consequently influenced the ways of conceptualising the past and approaching the present. Historicism created a way of approaching the past indirectly, in a similar manner which is apparent in the idea of progress[58]. As it becomes obvious in reading the *Theses*, Benjamin's concept of history is constructed as a critique of historicism; he especially wished to construct the direct, as opposed to the indirect relation to 'history'. Also Benjamin's critique of the idea of progress emerges as a critique of the the historical idea in historicism, and it includes the attempt to show how the Christian apocalyptic idea transformed into the Western secularised idea of history. Following Benjamin, the temporal experience of history is deeply connected to the way an individual conceives of time

in general. This was also one of the demands on Benjamin's 'historian', as the possibility of revising history should be conserved as a creation of the present temporal consciousness.

The other target of Benjamin's critique seems to be the idea of a temporal stability of truth, which should be possible to 'find' through historical research. However, Benjamin's critique of the truth in historicism did not consider the background of which the historicism was constructed, or the problematic field of understanding history from around 1750 to 1850, as it emerged to oppose the 'imagined' history, and instead introduced the history 'as it was'[59]. Instead of historical development of keeping with the idea of the 'stability' of historical truth, Benjamin emphasised singularity of historical moments. For instance the 'danger' (*Gefahr*) Benjamin refers to in the sixth Thesis is connected to a concrete historical situation in the years 1939 and 1940. The 'danger' refers to the ignoring of the actual moment and instead retaining of historical and optimistic visions of development or progress. Through the Theses, Benjamin criticises the optimistic idea of progress, which has been produced through the historical, scientific or economic structures since the era of Enlightenment. As he claims, although the idea has already leaned towards danger, it is still followed, especially by Social Democrats during that period (1940: X-XIII). In opposition to this, the task of Benjamin's 'historical materialist' would be to capture, and also actualise the moment of danger in a counter-action. But how to highlight the dangers in a situation, in which the transfer of political power falls into the continuity of the historical tradition? Theoretically, Benjamin outlines an antithesis of the existing situation, in which the focus should be drawn towards the present time, in which a moment of non-reconciliation of history should be introduced into it.

In the fascist era (*Zeitalter des Fascismus*) the danger also lies in the notion of historical materialism as remaining in the shadow, while, following Benjamin's metaphoric language, the new burning sun of fascism moved towards the centre: "Wie Blumen ihr Haupt nach der Sonne wenden, so strebt, kraft eines Heliotropismus geheimer Art, das Gewesene der Sonne sich zuzuwenden, die am Himmel der Geschichte im Aufgehen ist." (1940: IV) This transformation, which might well be the most inconspicuous of transformations, should be seen as a move towards the *res novissima*, which, whether it is characterised as 'Kingdom of God' or 'Classless Society', is by no means pre-determinated. In a very, and in this case probably far too sublime way, Benjamin suggests to Marxists that they open their eyes and take in the sun instead of the shadows. He also criticises a 'vulgar Marxism', which understands the class struggle mainly as materialistic. The Hegelian motto in the fourth Thesis, "Trachtet am ersten nach Nahrung und Kleidung, dann wird euch das Reich Gottes von selbst zufallen", parallels the issues of religion and ideology in their 'vulgar' or materialistic forms. In opposition to this, Benjamin draws on humour and courage, cunning and fortitude as timeless virtues which make any ideology retroactive[60]. However, Benjamin also modifies Engels' words that a "person has to eat, drink, live and dress before he or she can practice politics, art, science or religion"[61].

In deciphering the nature of the sixth Thesis, it is not as essential to turn to the question of the analysis of power, or to its Marxist and theological vocabularies, as it is to focus on the question of the temporality of the concept of *tradition*. For instance, in the draft of the Theses, Benjamin turned the origins and ideas of tradition around. As the background of his specific idea of the dialectics, Benjamin argues that one should create a connection between mental presence (*Geistesgegenwart*) and dialectical method. From Benjamin's own historical perspective, he sees the contemporaneous process as being a constellation of dangers (*Gefahrenkonstellation*, PW: 586-587; GS 1.3: 1242). The possibility of establishing a rupture in the flow of the historical and political continuity of power lies in the realisation of the 'dangers' of this continuity. Yet, in order to be effective, the political subject should, in the moment in which the constellation of the tradition is transferred to the intellectual or political followers, interfere with the transformation of the situation[62]. Here, the subject is encouraged to introduce an element of destruction into history, which not only aims at negating the previous history, but also at creating a beginning for the new one.

The concept of mental presence (*Geistesgegenwart*) combines the aspects of the present time, and the subject/actor and its historical position, with a political and critical attitude towards history. Benjamin's construction of an actor who is mentally alert in and about the present, should also be able to catch the 'images of time' (1940: V; GS I: 1244). The motif, which interrupts the flow of events, and which exists parallel to the disruptive element as a language or a quote, is included in the idea of an image, in which the temporal moment is held at a standstill (*Stillstellung*). Through this interruption of temporal stream, the actor finds a perspective on politics, as the *Geistesgegenwart* is defined in the Benjaminian attribute to the concept of a 'real' politician (see also PW: 594-595).

The origins of the Benjaminian *political Erkenntnis* are emerging in the crossroads of these moments of past and present, in which the mental presence of the actor catches events out of the flow of events, and he or she shapes them in his or her mind as a constellation (*Konstellation*) of events. When the imagined continuum of history is destroyed, the moment of the dialectical image appears: "Dieser Gefahrenkonstellation tritt die Geschichtsscreibung entgegen; an ihr hat sie ihre Geistesgegenwart zu bewähren. In dieser Gefahrenkonstellation zuckt das dialektische Bild blitzhaft auf." (GS 1: 1242) The moment of destruction in a materialist writing of history can be seen as a reaction to this art of constellation, which is constituted of historical heritage (*Überlieferung*) and its beneficiary. The uncritical reception of tradition implies a problem, which is transferred into a 'truth' of this heritage, and is conceived of as temporally stable and non-transformable. Here, the idea of the redemption of a situation means liberating historical heritage from its continuity and stability (GS 1: 1242).

Thematizing the matter in other words, Benjamin again presents the theological idea: "Der Messias kommt ja nicht nur als Erlöser; er kommt als Überwinder des Antichrist." (1940: VI). By this point in the *Theses*, at the

latest, the critical reader might begin to wonder if the text is actually a religious manifesto. However, also according to Tiedemann's interpretation, the Messiah might be conceptualised as the communist ideology, and the Antichrist as fascism, which turns the interpretation towards a political one[63]. The reference to the dead (*die Toten*), who are not safe from the attacks of the enemy, seems to refer to the legitimisation of the continuity of tradition in the form of fascist ideology or a linear mythos, which derives from the continuity of the ancient Greek eternal idea of time. The legitimisation of the new rule would be re-constructed by the re-writing of history, in which the insight of the 'danger' of continuity would be embedded.

A similar idea is expressed in *Zur Kritik der Gewalt* (1921). According to Benjamin, the continuity of power relies on the ancient belief in the royal mythical power, which is derived from the Gods. Altogether, the danger in the tradition lies in the continuity of the mythos of power, which is repeated here in Benjamin's critique of the continuous concept of history. Actually, the continuity of the mythos appears as a larger problem, since the critique outlines also Benjamin's view on the capitalistic 19th century Paris. In the *Kunstwerk* essay (1936), he characterises the mythos by the rituality and cult, which are understood as the fundamental forms of traditional art. As the "bourgeois mythos" included in art historical tradition is effectively used for fascist purposes, consequently, revolutionary art should, according to Benjamin, liberate art from this mythical stance. This could happen, for instance, by destroying the idea of art, which is in the *Kunstwerk* characterised by auratic distance, the continuity of tradition and contemplative aesthetic perception.

8. CONCEPTUALISING THE IMAGES OF THE PAST

Above I have repeatedly referred to the aspect of images in Benjamin's thought as introducing an element of rupture into the discursive-linear art of conceiving of the temporal or historical course. Although I shall return to the concept of images in the third part of this work, it is already in this part important to notice the connection between visuality and temporality in Benjamin's approach to history. In the fifth Thesis, the past (*Vergangenheit*) is expressed as an image, which may be associated, but not identified, with a graphic or photographic image. Benjamin's concept of image is far-reaching, as it also refers to internal and mental images, such as images of memory, or an act of knowledge (*Erkenntnis*).

The idea of images is also connected to Benjamin's interest in analogies and their appearance in the perception of a single flashing moment (1933a: 206). The decisive moment of acknowledging the (non-sensuous) similitude is instantaneous. While the instantaneous flash of perception slips by very quickly, it provides a glimpse into the potential sphere of recognition of the similitude of phenomena, which are presumed to be transferred from the pre-rational conception of knowledge and experience. This emphasises the *immediate moment of knowledge* (*Unmittelbarkeit der Erkenntnis*), an idea which dates back to Schlegel's conception of reflection as a means of emphasising the reflection as systematic thinking, as a *begreifen*. The immediacy that is emphasised in Schlegel characterises a difference to Kant's conception of knowledge (1919: 32).

Also Benjamin's concept of experience derives both from early romantic sources and from the critique of Kant[64]. The common motive in Fichte's and Schlegel's extension of the concept of experience, the issue which Benjamin examines in his dissertation, revolves around the philosophy of reflection. Namely, the reflection contained in the potentiality of acquiring the 'intel-

lectual intuition', which was excluded from Kant's critical concept of experience[65]. According to Caygill, the exercise of critique exceeds the concept of experience, especially in Benjamin's early work, in which he reflects on the matter of experience within the context of the aesthetic critique. The idea of experience that Benjamin sketches is "pointing to new topologies of space, time and the absolute" that Benjamin discovers in Hölderlin's poems[66]. Through reading and actualising the ideas of post-Kantian writers such as Novalis and Schlegel, Benjamin's critical analysis leads him to an attempt to extend Kant's concept of experience towards an intuitive experience. As is apparent in Benjamin's idea of knowledge as *Erkenntnis,* there does not exist a strict separation between intuition and understanding, but, rather, knowledge is tied to the experience, which appears as sudden or flashing, as is described in the fifth Thesis.

It could be claimed, that Benjamin's query of truth and knowledge has, in a larger sense, an aesthetic character. The concept of image refers to the visual nature of truth, however, visuality is only one component of it. The idea of image is an important part of Benjamin's conception of historical and temporal experience, while it outlines the importance of immediacy as the moment of knowledge, which stresses reflection as well as systematic thinking in acquiring historical knowledge. The immediacy is provided with the specific concept of the past, and is made visible through the facts, documents, or images of the past, which include the searched knowledge. Benjamin only approaches the past here as it appears in the collision with the present. The past, as temporally 'gone' (*vergangen*), cannot exist if it is not in some way utilised in a confrontation of the present acknowledgement. A more radical interpretation of this notion in the fifth Thesis might lead to the consideration that the relation to passing time could only be understood visually, rather than textually or discursively. Nevertheless, a dilemma occurs when the issue of sharing an experience or interpretation of an image is raised; words are needed in order to represent any images.

In the fifth Thesis, Benjamin fluently refers to his interpretation of non-sensuous connection in the form of the visuality of the past (cf. 1933a). As the differences between text and image are relative in some parts of Benjamin's work, they seem problematic as much as they are inspiring. Following Benjamin's notes to the *Erkenntniskritische Vorrede for the Trauerspiel*, Benjamin was excited by Ritter's idea of the *Schrift,* which has the visual, as well as the audio-visual character of the note *(Ton)*[67]. In *Lehre vom Ähnlichen*, the *Schrift* becomes an archive of the non-sensuous similitude and correspondence. In this sense, the *Schrift* might appear as representing one form of extended visuality, while differing from the images themselves. This seems to occur in Benjamin's claim regarding reading, which is at least two sided; the reading of the magical as well as the profane, in other words, simultaneously the non-sensuous and the sensuous meanings of the text or image (1933a: 209). The result is that language cannot be conceived of in a way in which the words come to represent the object. The affinities between linguistic elements also involve dimensions of rhythm and music, which are excluded from most approaches to semantics.

As, for example, Andrew Bowie notes, these are important issues in both discussing literary theory and interpreting Benjamin's idea of language[68].

The image of the past (*Bild der Vergangenheit*) is immediately recognised with the flash of a memory, or when some similarity between the past and the present appears as acknowledged in the consciousness of a subject. From this confrontation, the act of knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) emerges as a coherent understanding, which also includes the aspect of experience as a reflection between knowledge and this experience.

8.1. The Significance of Temporal Knowledge[69]

The moment of intelligibility (*Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit*) is one of the most central questions of Benjamin's work. In the fifth Thesis, Benjamin refers to the image of the past as the object of knowledge (*Erkenntnis*), which is considered irretrievable (*unwiederbringlich*). This emphasises the uniqueness of the temporal image: "Denn es ist ein unwiederbringliches Bild der Vergangenheit, das mit jeder Gegenwart zu verschwinden droht, die sich nicht als in ihm gemeint erkannte." (1940: V)

Despite the irretrievable character of the moment, it is considered to be recognisable in other times, although the moment invariably changes some of its characteristics through time. This thought is reminiscent of the idea of Kairos as an insight, or the moment of right action, which appears only when identified as such. In this structure of thought, Benjamin connects the present time, subjectivity and the idea of cognition as components that shape both individual temporality and historical understanding. One consequence of the moment and its unique message is basically embedded in the aspect of 'liberating' the subject from the idea of the causality of action, as is also the case in stressing the potential redemption (*Erlösung*) of the past moments through the insight of the present. As the temporality of the Benjaminian concept of redemption shows, the causality of action is only one of the possible combinations of historical events and their temporal order[70].

The other possibilities, which are more prevalent in Benjamin's thinking, appear as collisions of singular events, in which the temporality and the meaning between events is possible to interpret during all coming times. Through these issues, Benjamin comes to emphasise temporal contingency, which is embedded in history. The idea of redemption provides another possibility of interpreting the relation between the past and the present, in which the present subject takes a more active role in interfering with the temporal course of history by re-interpreting the events. This re-interpretation might include transferring the meaning of events from the margin to the centre, from the barbaric to the cultural elite, in keeping with the infamous appearance of Benjamin's historian as the *Chiffonier*.

The autonomic character of the past moment is considered as a distinguishing factor in its relation to its historical context. It simultaneously draws the universal towards the individual and the abstract towards the concrete.

Nevertheless, the position of the 'actor', who actualises the past through his or her moment of intelligibility, is equally as important as this deduction. It is necessary to make a temporal distinction between the concepts of the present, which are generally conceived of as temporally located in between the past and the future, and the moment of the *Erkennbarkeit*. By distinguishing between these two temporalities, one filled with subjective recognition and the other with its potentiality, at least four different possibilities for temporal experience appear:

1. The past as an abstract concept (die Vergangenheit). The past exists here as a field of reference, but one cannot know or understand it in general, since an eternal or universal idea of the past does not come close to its true character. It is this point of approach that makes Benjamin's view so distinct from, for instance, Hegel's. The Benjaminian concept of past is considered to include temporal indexes as a means for 'measuring' between the past and the present. These indexes, as is noted above, confront one another in various concepts of time, and they are important in creating temporal differences for the various concepts of time.

2. The way in which the past appears as the object of acknowledgement, concerning an image, a quote, an object of art, a commodity etc. This refers to the way in which the past is seen as crystallised in singular objects. The 'truth' only becomes apparent through fleeting or flashing moments, and as such it also is possible to verbally mediate. Leibniz's idea of the monad was a major source of inspiration in Benjamin's search for positions from which to approach the historical truth. Yet, Benjamin converted Leibniz's concept of the monad to suit his own conceptual scheme, in which it lost its original interpretative character, but gained a new one in the process.

3. The present, which is understood through temporal knowledge, include a potentiality to characterise the moment of Kairos. As well it includes the potential time for the event of redemption.

4. The moment of Now, in which the acknowledgement/insight between the singular moment of the present (Now) and past (Then) occurs. This moment is labelled Jetztzeit later in the Theses. In this moment, the recognising subject is characterised as a temporal mode of being, as Jetztzsein (PW: 495).

The subjective 'identity' which emerges from this 'map' of temporal experiences, consists of a multiplicity of temporal constellations. As such, it is distinguishable from the (universally) constructed identity. The 'truth', or the relationship between the present moment and past images, is originated in these temporal confrontations and connected with the act of acknowledgement. For Benjamin, the 'truth' is not only a temporal function of intelligibility, an idea which he criticises in Marxism, but is also found in the "temporal core" *(Zeitkern)*, in which the object and the subject of cognition are simultaneously present (PW: 578)[71] .

What then does it mean to articulate the past in an historical way?

> Vergangenes historisch artikulieren heißt: dasjenige in der Vergangenheit erkennen, was in der Konstellation eines und desselben Augenblickes zusammentritt. Historische Erkenntnis ist einzig und allein möglich im historischen Augenblick. Die Erkenntnis im historischen Augenblick aber ist immer eine Erkenntnis von einem Augenblick. Indem die Vergangenheit sich zum Augenblick – zum dialektischen Bilde – zusammenzieht, geht sie in die unwillkürliche Erinnerung der Menschheit ein (GS 1.3. 1233).

This quote describes how Benjamin connects the topics of historical knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) and the historical moment in a way that creates a *dialectical image* (*dialektisches Bild*). The moment signifies the importance of temporal singularity, and is distinguished from the past in general (*Vergangenheit*), which is not temporally problematised. As a general or abstract idea, the past is conceived of as homogenous and void of any specific meaning, as is characterised in the temporal 'map' above. The emerging constellation of the moments in both the past and the present of the acknowledging subject create the possibility for what appears to be an image-like recollection. The passing historical moment is not always expressed as an image, yet the specific concept of the dialectical image (*dialektisches Bild*) describes the historical confrontation between the past and present moments.

The emerging image is supposed to be conserved in the *unwillkürliche Erinnerung,*(*mémoire involontaire*) which Benjamin describes as the unconscious memory of mankind[72]. The knowledge of this memory is not understood as a truth, but rather is explicitly distinguished from it. Furthermore, the past images appear in the consciousness as *involontaire,* which means that they are not dependent on the will of the subject. In this sense, one form of history for Benjamin appears as an image emerging from the *mémoire involontaire*. The open question is, how are these images to be documented as 'history', while retaining their immediate character and inspiring further dialectical images in future interpretations? It seems that Benjamin's own suggestion is to combine the quotations with the commentary in order to form a montage, and that this method would be practised in showing, as opposed to narrating history (cf. PW: 572, 574).

The temporality between the memory-image and its recognition is impossible to grasp as linearly progressing, and this art of remembrance is impossible to reach through the discursive-rational thinking. One of the few fragments in which Benjamin combines the issues of *mémoire involontaire*, image and their specific temporality is hidden in the draft of the *Theses:* "Der unwillkürlichen Erinnerung bietet sich – das unterscheidet sie von der willkürlichen – nie ein Verlauf dar sondern allein ein Bild. (Daher die "Unordnung" als der Bildraum des unwillkürlichen Eingedenkens)." (GS 1.3: 1243)

Benjamin conceives of remembrance as being related to Image-space (*Bildraum)* in a way which is not 'rationally organised'. Although the *mémoire involontaire* is a confusing concept in attempting to search for Benjamin's idea of historical knowledge, what makes it relevant here, is that instead of the 'truth', *origins* of any moment, phenomenon, action or idea becomes visible. The ori-

gins are comprehended neither as temporally closed nor as unified, but are possible to recreate and reinterpret in every present moment. The close connection between the origins and memory is perhaps not that convincing in the search for historical knowledge, but is an important factor in describing how the origins appear and are expressed, for example, in the sphere of aesthetics and in works of art. As such, they form the expression of the 'memory-images' of humankind. This implies the possibility of interpreting the works of art as containing the 'memory' within themselves, and the idea of art critique implies the unfolding of pieces of this memory as the content value of art.

For Benjamin, the recognizability *(Erkennbarkeit)* is not conceived of as a stable moment in time, but rather is characterised by dynamism or change. This is one reason for the transformation of the question of consciousness from the philosophical-theoretical level towards political consciousness and critique. The moment of *Erkenntnis* creates a situation that requires action in the sense of actualising the as yet non-actualised images of the past. The action might also involve historical or political documentation, which inspires a reinterpretation of the previous conception of history. This is one side of the task included in the 'redemption' of the past. The impulse, which interrupts the flow of events, is included in the idea of image, in which the temporal moment is motionless. Through this moment of immobility in the temporal flow, the actor finds a perspective on politics in the present, which creates a possibility of actualising the *Geistesgegenwart* (cf. PW: 594-595).

8.2. Truth and Origins

The ideas of temporality and historical or political knowledge obviously are connected in Benjamin's work, yet he does not explain how they are connected. In the *Theses,* he presents the truth *(die Wahrheit)* as being absent or impossible to grasp during an historical occurrence; it gives a hint of itself, but is not to be recovered as the whole truth or something substantial behind the world of appearances. On the contrary, Benjamin's glance at truth in the *Theses* is fleeting, and escapes the moment one attempts to catch it. In order to unfold some of the basic elements of Benjamin's concepts of truth and origins, I shall follow his reasoning a bit further.

For Benjamin, the truth might appear in the right constellation of words and things, as a montage of ideas, or as a (re)construction of previous truths. As noted above, he does not keep within the Kantian distinction between understanding and intuition, but attempts to overcome them with his idea of philosophical presentation *(Darstellung),* which, in turn, should make the distinction unnecessary. The idea which comes closer to truth than understanding is the idea of beauty, as Benjamin follows Plato's ideas presented in *Symposion* (cf. 1925: 210). Here, the truth is also reminiscent of Eros, in a way how the subject finds the Eros in those people who are pleasurable to look at, such as the sight of a loved one. Benjamin simultaneously transfers the idea of truth from the object to the subject, although he does not strictly separate them. Instead,

he conceives of the truth as emerging as a reflection between subject and object in the act of perception.

Similarly to the idea of beauty, the truth should remain free from timeless definitions or judgements. Truth (or maybe something truthful) exists an sich in the singular phenomena, but if and how it is perceived depends on the perceiver (1925: 210-212). However, Benjamin not only follows, but also criticises Plato as he does not understand the truth as striving towards something absolute, whether it be conceived of as being, truth or time. In the *Vorrede* of *Trauerspiel,* the ideas of truth and knowledge are explicitly separated from each other: "Die Wahrheit, vergegenwärtigt im Reigen der dargestellten Ideen, entgeht wie immer gearteten Projektion in den Erkenntnisbereich. Erkenntnis ist ein Haben.(...) Ihm bleibt der Besitzcharacter. Diesem Besitztum ist Darstellung sekundär. Es existiert nicht bereits als ein Sich-Darstellendes. Gerade dies aber gilt von der Wahrheit." (1925: 209)

Following *Trauerspiel,* knowledge appears to have the possibility of being possessed *(haben),* whereas the truth exists already in a self-presentation of the ideas. As the philosophical method of presenting the truth is the *Darstellung,* the true knowledge can 'express' itself in language, although there is no truth beyond language, as it escapes any attempts of occupation[73]. The task that Benjamin's assigns to the coming philosophy includes the presentation of truth *(Darstellung der Wahrheit)*, in which truth is not temporally fixed, but rather, following the Romantic conception, appears as a *medium* of reflection[74]. This makes it historical and also dependent upon the historical situations and reflection. In Benjamin's early work, the medium, in which truth can be acknowledged is understood as language, and in his later thinking it also acquires image-character. This marks the position of, for instance, a work of art in relation to other works of art, and the truth appears in this case as temporally contingent as is the work of art[75].

If these thoughts are compared with the idea of the true image of history, which appears in a short flash, as noted in the beginning of the fifth Thesis, the following supposition can be made. Benjamin views the moment of the past as approachable only through individual knowledge of its existence. In the moment when the flash of insight occurs, something truthful of history is grasped, although it is not the Truth as an abstract concept. If the past is understood as a universal idea, including collective and mechanically ordered (documented) experience of history, it loses the aspect of truth because of the universality. Again, Benjamin's thoughts scatter the idea of stability, or the possibility of achieving the knowledge of truth in a transcendental sense and above temporal singularity.

As Benjamin's philosophy includes the method of *Darstellung,* I conceive of his philosophy of history as also possessing this characteristic. This means that his concept of history is also double-sided. 'History as a text' can be conceived of parallel to 'history as images', since history is also a *Schauplatz,* which includes the possibility of its visualisation (GS VI: 90, 1925: 242-245). Dependent on the methodical approach of the historian, the presentation of history is always possible to transform. This makes Benjamin's motif of 'showing' history

as various stations of approaches more understandable, and it looks as if he would have practised his own method of bringing events to a standstill and showing them as such, for example in forms of Traktats in *Trauerspiel* (1925: 208), or as Theses (1926, 1933d, 1940).

In the sketch of the fifth Thesis, Benjamin further emphasises the connection between authentic and fleeting truth: "Nur als Bild, das auf Nimmerwiedersehen im Moment seiner Erkennbarkeit eben aufblitzt, ist die Vergangenheit festzuhalten. Seiner Flüchtigkeit dankt es, wenn es authentisch ist. In ihr besteht seine einzige Chance. Eben weil diese Wahrheit vergänglich ist und ein Hauch sie dahinrafft, hängt viel an ihr." (GS 1.3: 1247) The possibility of acknowledging the truth stems from the moment of Kairos, which further characterises the historical and temporarily passing *(vergänglich)* nature of Benjamin's concept of truth. The moment of authenticity refers to the concept of origin, which is discussed theoretically especially in the *Trauerspiel*. As discussed with the concept of memory, the temporality of the concept of origin has the strong connection with present time. Benjamin claims that the origins are not to be sought in the past, nor are they more accurate in the event of someone's or something's birth. Instead, they are to be localised in the *authenticity* of the present time. As truth, the origins are thoroughly historical, which means that they are transformable in historical time and are not to be thought of as an emergence *(Entstehung)* of the issue in question: "Im Ursprung wird kein Werden des Entsprungenen, vielmehr dem Werden und Vergehen Entspringendes gemeint. Der Ursprung steht im Fluß des Werdens als Strudel und reißt in seine Rhytmik das Entstehungsmaterial hinein.(...) Sie will als Restauration, als Wiederherstellung einerseits, als eben darin Unvollendetes, Unabgeschlossenes anderseits erkannt sein." (1925: 226)

What makes Benjamin's perspective on the concept origins temporally radical is its dynamic character. On the one hand it is used restoratively, and on the other, as an infinite and open moment in the pre- and post-history of an interpreted event. But then, where and how can the origins be identified? The time of the origins' intelligibility is in the extended idea of the present, in which every phenomenon is seen as being redefined through the present conditions. The importance of understanding the specific character of the conception of the present in Benjamin's thinking becomes clear, if not earlier, when the temporality of the concepts of cognition, truth and origins are examined.

Especially with regard to the concept of origins, Benjamin's debt to Friedrich Nietzche's ideas of origins and its connection to history is obvious. Nietzsche's understanding of history is constructed in opposition with metahistory or the teleological view of history and time; it does not suppose the existence of a universal truth, nor is it directed towards the search for the origins of history or phenomena in general. Nietzsche uses several versions of the conception of origins, but they could be divided into two main categories[76]. Firstly, the concept of origins can be compared to the concept of birth or emergence *(Entstehung, Herkunft, Abkunft, Geburt)*, an idea that Benjamin repeats in the aforementioned passage from the *Trauerspiel*. In *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, Nietzsche parallels the phenomenon of 'birth' to feelings of guilt and responsi-

bility[77]. Secondly, for instance in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Nietzsche claims that the origins of knowledge *(Ursprung der Erkenntnis)* are comparable to a logical 'birth' or the emergence *(Herkunft)* of knowledge[79]. The power of knowledge *(Erkenntnis)* lies not in its level of 'truthfulness', but in its age. This also means that the *Erkenntnis* is temporally definable, which again is compatible with Benjamin's idea of the temporal character of truth, although Benjamin does not make any value difference between old or new truths.

Nietzsche's concept of origins also is in opposition with the metaphysical origins. In terms of a beginning, Nietzsche does not presuppose any pure *historical* origins. Instead, the origins can always be redefined in connection with the phenomena in question. As for Benjamin, Nietzsche's origins seem to be temporally placed in the present. This implies that Nietzsche's genealogy exists in a way in which different phenomena are historically 'constructed', and through this construction, the 'original' meanings of conceptions like 'goodness' or 'morality' possibly become altered. In *Zur Genealogie der Moral,* Nietzsche claims, in accordance with the question of truth, that the origin of goodness should lie in the necessity of unselfishness, but instead of emphasising the unselfishness itself, history has turned the meaning of the goodness into utility, in the shadow of the moral good[79].This is one reason why a universally definable goodness or morality as such does not exist, as the basis for the understanding of those virtues is constantly changing with time.

Through genealogy, one is suggested to find that behind the phenomena there exists something else than what is already assumed. Yet, for Nietzsche, this something is not the essence *(Wesen)* or the secrecy of an object, but rather the fact that the phenomena has no essence. Birth is not rational, as the birth of Ratio is understood as contingent and irrational[80]. Nietzsche claims that the genealogist needs history in order to destroy the illusion of historical origins. This implies that 'true history' does not rely on stability, because he sees the idea of a primary, timeless stability as impossible. He takes an even stronger position with regard to the idea that everything that appears to rely on stability should be systematically deconstructed. Truth or knowledge is not to be found by anamnesis, or by rediscovering incidents and their origins. Instead, knowledge should be based on the discontinuity of history and knowledge. This understanding of discontinuity is directed towards human existence, as 'true history' does not primarily concern historically distant events, but also concerns those which happen in the present. All in all, for Nietzsche, there exists throughout all histories so much discussion on the idea of truth that the question has become so hard to approach and nearly impossible to pose.

Although Benjamin refers to Nietzsche only very shortly in his *Theses,* the ideas of contingency, discontinuity and the temporality of origins are examples of topics which re-emerge in his own 'genealogy' of those concepts. The idea that the past can be re-remembered through the knowledge of a certain moment might infer that any moment conserves parts of the truth embedded in history. When the past and present moments confront each other in the consciousness of the individual, the past is re-remembered in the larger context of human history as its *mémoire involontaire.* In this moment, what can be refer-

red to as origins are created, whether it be the originality of a certain moment, or the origins of a new phenomena created by the act of interpretation. However, I do not interpret Benjamin's approach being as nihilistic as Nietzsche's. Benjamin does discuss the discontinuity of history or destruction of tradition, but not as systematic or programmatic approaches to history. Moreover, Benjamin leaves the task of the final interpretation to the reader, like the Talmudic master, who emphasises the fact that no correct interpretation exists[81].

Benjamin's thoughts could be compared, in addition to Nietzschean approach, to Michel Foucault's view on history and knowledge. As does Nietzsche, Foucault also emphasises knowledge as being a perspective. He emphasises the textual character of history as constructing the 'discourse' in which the historian exists. An important source for both Foucault and Benjamin is the archive, although the way in which they use the knowledge and proceed with the research from their 'archives' is very different. Foucault systematises and re-systematises the knowledge found in archives, into his interpretative schema. He sees an archive as taking on concrete forms in systems that establish statements as events and things which produce further discourses. Benjamin proceeds rather from the things and the events themselves, and he considers them as singular moments in the confrontation of the knowledge of a reader of his history. Through this he simultaneously reverses many interpretations while commenting on them.

The methods and proceedings of Benjamin and Foucault also differ in their relation to the heterogeneity of events. Foucault constantly draws attention to this heterogeneity, while Benjamin's work is located, as Sigrid Weigel rightly remarks, within the heterogeneity itself[83]. Nevertheless, as different as their methods might be, both of them emphasise the specific and neglected aspects of culture and civilisation, whether referring to the silent or barbarian side of culture. Benjamin requests that the historian should 'brush history against its grain' (1940: VII), whereas Foucault attempts to liberate it from the metaphysical or anthropological model of memory and he constructs a 'counter-memory'. This would transform the historical perspective into a different temporal model than it had previously been comprised of[84].

9. A BACKWARDS PROPHESY

In the first draft of the seventh Thesis, Benjamin imagines a Historian as being a prophet "turned backwards" (*rückwärts gekehrte Prophet* GS 1: 1237). Benjamin's advice on understanding the idea could be followed in at least two different ways. *Firstly,* using the example of Fustel de Coulanges, Benjamin's figure of the historian describes the way in which history is presented as a matter of identification. The identification with an historical object supposes that an Historian should repeat the past without being blurred by the interpretations or the aspects of the present: "si vous voulez revivre une époque, oubliez que vous savez ce qui s'est passé après elle" (GS 1: 1237).

If the Historian sinks deeply into the epoch researched, it means that he or she becomes tempted to forget the conditions of the present writing situation. This might lead to the impossibility of catching *any* of the temporal truth in the Benjaminian sense, since there can be no truth without a reflection between the past and the present (cf. GS I: 1237). One of the important questions here is, how does tradition come to signify 'cultural heritage'? Benjamin's own suggestion of, for example, a 'cultural history' would keep the reflection on history open to later interpretations, as he considers cultural documents as inhabiting the notion of time and historical events themselves. In this he turns against the idea of forgetting the present, and emphasises the detachment of the identifying history[85].

The *second* possibility of conceptualising the 'backwards prophet' in temporal terms can be seen in Benjamin's view of the Historian figure as turning his back on the present and looking into the past. This damages the ability to 'foresee the present' in the specific and somewhat extraordinary way in which Benjamin comprehends political awareness. Benjamin quotes Turgot on politics as foreseeing the present time *(die Gegenwart vorherzusehen)*, in which he emphasises the actuality of the real *(echte)* writing of history (GS 1: 1237; PW: 590, 598). The potential for the historian to also act as 'a politician' in the

Benjaminian sense is embedded in his or her awareness of the present conditions. With regard to the figure of the politician, Benjamin suggests that he seizes the temporal meaning *before* it becomes past. In this sense, he detaches himself from the passive idea of waiting for the future, or subordinating the coming time into categories of temporal expectation. Instead, the waiting, which Benjamin describes as the phantasmagoric image of time, should be turned towards the liveliness of a contemporary action: "Die Zukunftsdrohung ins erfüllte Jetzt zu wandeln, dies einzig wünchschenswerte telepatische Wunder ins Werk leibhafter Geistesgegenwart." (1928: 115).

The condition of mental presence is included in a temporal chance and its realisation in action. It expects the actor to find the possibility of turning the experience of time into his or her own favour, and also increases the possibility of playing with time before the moment is over. However, in one way this notion differs from the previous cairological interpretation, in that the moment is conceived of as turning the *future* expectation into action. As Weidmann notes, the opposite of this awareness is mental absence *(Geistesabwesenheit)*, which in this case further characterises the figure of the backwards historian[86]. Altogether, the *Geistesgegenwart* characterises the condition of a political agent in the extensive field of the present, as his or her existential condition is intensified with the expectation to turn the waiting into an action.

Here, the Janus face of the historian appears, depending on the level of mental awareness, either historical or political (GS I: 1235-1237). The figures of politician and historian could also be characterised by distinguishing between these temporal dimensions. Based on this distinction, the following figures would emerge:

Firstly, an historian who operates with materials such as historical documents or historiography, mainly for the purpose of documenting the past without a direct connection to the present. This figure of a 'traditional' historian has existed since around the early 19th century and since the transformation of the idea of history, which "liberates us from the repetition of earlier mistakes", and history as a 'teacher', *magistra vitae*, a figure which occurred after the *Neuzeit*. Early 19th century historians, such as for instance young Ranke, could be seen to remain between the traditional Historian and the *magistra vitae*, if interpreted in this way[87].

Secondly, the temporal distinction enlightens the position of critical history by creating distance from the past. As the topos of historiography changed during the 19th century, the work of the historian became not only to 'teach' but also to judge the past, which could be articulated by modifying Schiller, *Weltgeschichte* also became a *Weltgericht*[88]. The critical history begins to mix the elements of the past and the present in order to move towards a revision of the earlier writing of history, which Koselleck refers to as *Geschichte umschreiben*[89]. In Benjaminian terms as expressed in the Theses, this might be called the new position of the historical materialist.

Thirdly, the figure of the Politician emphasises a mental presence, as the present experience is intensified through the attempt to *foresee* the present. The

prediction should become actualised in political action, which then captures the future tense mainly from overcoming the individual condition.

The growing importance for Benjamin to formulate the moment of *Jetztzeit* in order to crystallise the temporal experience becomes apparent in the seventh Thesis. The Now-time will connect the ambiguity of historical and political temporalities in a different way than concepts like remembrance (*Eingedenken*[90]) or redemption (*Erlösung* cf. GS I.3: 1248), although these concepts also express the idea of the past experience, which becomes actualised in the present.

However, Benjamin does not introduce the Now-time yet, but instead, he makes apparent two further ways to present history in its linear form. The negative identification (*Einfühlung*) with the past, firstly implies a slowness of the heart (*acedia*), which is one of the causes of melancholy (1940: VII)[91]. If the nature of the objects that are presented as objects of identification are considered, the motive for this metaphor and also for its critique becomes clear. For Benjamin, they are the documents of the winners (*Sieger*) of history, which is comparable to Nietzsche's critique of the identification with the genius and the heroes in his *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen*. Nietzsche's critique of the monumental writing of history is sceptical to the belief in humanity and a human Being, if it is understood as the German *Mensch*. Nietzsche is critical to the idea of history, which is seen as proceeding towards the eternal progression of mankind, and its ideal images are understood as teachers and public figures: this is yet one more reason to be melancholic. The identification with the famous and powerful is a central characteristic in the creation of the temporally eternal light that intends to overpower the marginal, dark and vanishing aspects of past. What strengthens this myth of monumentality, are, for instance, national holidays and ceremonies, and the celebration of victims of war on memorial days[92].

The counterpart of the identification of history is reconciling the past through the narrative (*Erzählung*), which is an important component in the discussion of the mediation of history. In keeping with this idea, Benjamin comes to criticise the narrative writing of history (cf. GS 1: 1248; Benjamin, 1936b). Yet, in discussing the narrative, the temporality of the narrative *story* should be distinguished from the event of narration itself. Consequently, historical narration, which is another way to produce the feeling of identification with the past, should naturally be distinguished form narration in a novel. However, the act of story telling (*Geschichte erzählen*) does in fact have something in common with the writing of history, namely, the mediation of experiences (*Erfahrungen*). For instance in his article on the Russian author Nikolai Lesskow, Benjamin claims that during the course of modernity, the art of narration (*Kunst des Erzählens*) is in the process of coming to its end (1933c: 214; 1936b: 439). The reason for this is that the experience itself is in the process of destruction[93].

The durability of the experience as a matter of collective and individual tradition is something that Benjamin uses as the background for his conception of

the *Erfahrung*, and the *Erlebnis* becomes its counter concept. In *Erlebnis*, the unity of the experience and, in the Proustian sense, its temporal durability and compositional integrity are destroyed[94]. As Benjamin uses the concept of experience in discussing *mémoire involontaire* (1939b: 608-609), it is the durability that is expressed. Benjamin follows Proust in the sense that he understands *mémoire involontaire* as something that is not merely 'superficially lived' *(erlebt)*, or that the subject has not confronted as an Erlebnis, since that would imply the destruction of the memory (cf. 1939b: 613). Rather, the definition of experience which is preserved in *mémoire involontaire* comes closer to the German term *Gedächtnis*, meaning protecting the memories.

The meaning of the coherent sharing of experiences is, for Benjamin, in keeping with the tradition of oral narration, which brings the durability of experiences forth in the physical and present figure of the narrator. The immediacy of this sharing of experiences between the narrators and audience is, according to Benjamin, vanishing in modern times (1936b: 440), and the peak of this destruction of experiences was experienced by the generation who lived the first World War. This rupture in mediating experiences should, however, be used in the creation of new experiences, as opposed to being transferred to the nostalgia of the 'old days' (1933c: 218) created by, for instance, historically identifying stories. On a societal level, the scattering and social sharing of individual experiences could be described as a transformation from traditional communities to more individualistic modern societies, in which the common basis of experience is destroyed and fragmented.

The way how Benjamin's idea of the poverty of experience is dualistic, is shortly described above. On the one hand, it allows for the possibility of creating a new perspective on time and history, and on the other hand, he describes how sharing of the experiences in the oral tradition *(as Mit-teilung)* has been transformed into the pure exchange of information, which implies the degeneration of experiences. All in all, he sees that the mediation of subjective experiences via the physical and mental presence of the narrator, through the memory which becomes actualised in the story, vanishes in 'modernity', as the information becomes a replacement for the importance of the subjective presence. Through the publicity, however, the information turns to sensation, which characterises a change towards Erlebnis, a modern disconnected form of experience[95].

10. CULTURE AND BARBARISM: HISTORY IN PROGRESS

In his essay on *Eduard Fuchs*, Benjamin claims that the concept of 'barbarism' is included in Western culture itself, and that these two concepts are in fact inseparable. He also raises the issue of space 'without experiences' as an illustration of the new art of barbarism: "Diese Erfahrungsarmut ist Armut nicht nur an privaten sondern an Menschheitserfahrungen überhaupt. Und damit eine Art von neuem Barbarentum." (1933c: 215) As the idea of poverty of experiences, Benjamin's concept of barbarism is dualistic.

In the first connection it describes the double side of the idea of progress. The other side of barbarism describes a positive idea of beginning from the 'new', of constructing an image of the world different from the state of earlier experiences. This idea outlines the moment of creation in a scientific or artistic sense (1933c: 215). Benjamin created the conception of *positive barbarism* as a critique of cultural barbarism, and positive barbarism implores us to recognise a new space of cultural thinking, which is detached from earlier experience. This space is the building block of intellectual and aesthetic action, an avant-guardian rupture, in that it disrupts the previous history. This connects his reflections on history to his studies on art, as the more explicit examples of positive barbarism are cubism and surrealism(PW: 292, 593)[96]. Deconstructing barbarism means "bursting history against its grain", or liberating the potentiality of history from the chains of 'progress'. The historical materialist is the figure who should undertake this task, which means interrupting the bourgeois continuum of power: "Er (der historische Materialist/kl) betrachtet es als seine Aufgabe, die Geschichte gegen den Strich zu bürsten." (1940: VII)

Characterising *positive barbarism* in historico-philosophical terms, one should abandon his or her search for historical times of decadence or barbarism (*es gibt keine Verfallszeiten*, PW: 575). This is the only perspective for Benjamin, in which every historical moment becomes possible to quote, and

the evaluation of events as marginal or unimportant loses its legitimacy. He reflects on the issue further in the notion of cultural historical dialectics, which attempt to overcome classical distinctions between good and bad. "Kleiner methodischer Vorschlag zur kulturgeschichtlichen Dialektik. Es ist sehr leicht, für jede Epoche auf ihren verschiedenen 'Gebieten' Zweiteilungen nach bestimmten Gesichtspunkten vorzunehmen, dergestalt daß auf der einen Seite der 'fruchtbare', 'zukunftsvolle', 'lebendige', 'positive' auf der anderen der vergebliche, rückständige, abgestorbene Teil dieser Epoche liegt." (PW: 573)

For Benjamin, escaping from this classical dialectics of history means a re-evaluation of the negative, or reinterpretation of the events without the fear of cultural decadence. This happens by putting the aspects under contemporary scrutiny, until history appears more justified or 'real' from the present perspective. As Jennings puts it, the historical event itself lies buried beneath the accumulated weight of subsequent interpretations[97]. For Benjamin, the concept of progress was especially dualistic in the context of Western cultural history, as it, including the aspect of degeneration, described the other side of barbarism: "Die Überwindung des Begriffs des 'Fortschritts' und des Begriffs der Verfallszeit sind nur zwei Seiten ein und derselben Sache." (PW: 575)[98]

Benjamin did not conceive of progress as opposite to the reactionary or decadent character of history, but rather as the other side of the same substance of which the 'continuities' of history are made. Here, it was not only the idea of progress that he criticised, but also the dominance of the interpretations following the Christian *Heilsgeschichte*, the victory of Enlightenment thought or the bourgeois, who managed to sweep the other truths under their historical carpet and label them as marginal. This is one of the reasons why Benjamin considers barbarism and culture to be two sides of the same coin. In order to view history in this new context, the dualism and prejudices of decline, which included the request of overcoming the mythical fear of chaos, irrationality and madness, had to be subjugated.

The duality of progress and regression is also apparent in Koselleck's research on the history of the concept of progress. Progress as an opposition of the decline *(Niedergang)*, is, pace Koselleck, a modern category, in which the content of experiences *(Erfahrungsgehalt)* and excessity of expectations *(Erwartungsüberschuß)* were not given before the 19th Century. However, the concepts of *Niedergang* or *Rückschritt* are not pure counter concepts of *Fortgang* or *Fortschritt*, of which Koselleck draws examples from Turgot, Condorcet, Wieland or Kant. Instead, the asymmetric relation between progress and degeneration is the reason for the importance of their temporalization. As progress detaches itself from the restriction of degeneration during modernity, and becomes, after Koselleck's interpretation, the progress of progress itself *(Fortschritt des Fortschritt)*, it becomes a procedural conception of its own reflection. When historical time is discovered as a process, it is also becomes dynamic. This is one reason more to suggest that an experience that would cover the expectation of the future, no longer exists[99].

One important idea in interpreting how Benjamin follows Ranke's conception of the past that shows itself *(Vergangenheit läßt sich zeigen)*, is the idea that

progress changes the notion of time into such an abstract concept that history becomes impossible to think about something visible *(anschaulich)*. In this, Koselleck argues that there are no genuine historical concepts that deal with historical time, but only metaphors. During this determining phase in the conception of progress, the image-character of history disappears[100]. Returning to Benjamin's notion of the image-character of the past (1940: V), it seems that he is actually not as far removed from Ranke as it had primarily appeared. His notion that a truth is possible to show *(zeigen)* points even more explicitly to an idea of past that can show itself through history, derived from early 19th century historians.

Benjamin combines the temporal origins of 'progress' developed from Christian salvation story with the Jewish idea of history as a catastrophe. From his point of view, the notion of understanding history as continuous and linear *(Daß es so weitergeht)*, in other words, the idea that the mythos constructed during the 19th century writing of history is not destroyed but continuous, is already catastrophic. More specifically, in the eighth Thesis, this characterises a state of exception *(Ausnahmezustand)*. For Benjamin, catastrophe is immanent in every present situation that does not question itself. This self-understanding would create the critical distance to the course of time and history, and confronting catastrophe leads to something, which in theological terms could be called redemption. In a political situation this leads to revolution, as it actualises the increasing gap between past experience and future expectations.

11. THE LIMIT SITUATION OF HISTORY

VIII

Die Tradition der Unterdrückten belehrt uns darüber, daß der ›Ausnahmezustand‹, in dem wir leben, die Regel ist. Wir müssen zu einem Begriff der Geschichte kommen, der dem entspricht. Dann wird uns als unsere Aufgabe die Herbeiführung des wirklichen Ausnahmezustands vor Augen stehen; und dadurch wird unsere Position im Kampf gegen den Faschismus sich verbessern. Dessen Chance besteht nicht zuletzt darin, daß die Gegner ihm im Namen des Fortschritts als einer historischen Norm begegnen. – Das Staunen darüber, daß die Dinge, die wir erleben, im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert ›noch‹ möglich sind, ist *kein* philosophisches. Es steht nicht am Anfang einer Erkenntnis, es sei denn der, daß die Vorstellung von Geschichte, aus der es stammt, nicht zu halten ist.

Both the eighth Thesis and Benjamin's *Zur Kritik der Gewalt* (1921) address the question of how the continuous tradition of oppression has become an historical norm. This situation is characterised as the 'exceptional order' *(Ausnahmezustand)* that has become the rule: "Die Tradition der Unterdrückten belehrt uns darüber, daß der 'Ausnahmezustand' in dem wir leben, die Regel ist." (1940: VIII)

Consequently, Benjamin suggests a way to destroy this rule by creating a 'real' state of exception, in order to interrupt the current historical order in the formulation of a temporal limit situation, which is immediately related to the actual situation. This new conception of history should be shifting away from

the linearity of history that is here also signified as a continuous stage of emergency. Benjamin's problem was that those who were ostensibly ideologically opposed to this state of exception, were themselves suffering from the same disease, namely, the belief in the automatic and determinate character of the progress. Above, the idea of progress was characterised as an illusion reflecting the idea of a homogenous and linear history. Benjamin's intellectual aim is to deconstruct this idea, but throughout the course of the *Theses,* he succeeds only in making the critique appear obvious.

In his earlier essay *Zur Kritik der Gewalt*, Benjamin focuses on the historical continuum of violence. Violence is thematized as being especially embedded in institutions like the state, and the legal and judicial systems, which Benjamin interprets as preserving and strengthening the concept of power, based on the ancient idea of the mythos of the divine power originating in God. The critique of violence *(Gewalt)* is intended to remove itself from the juridical tradition, as the critique of historicism similarly questions the continuous view of history. This leads to an inquiry into the symbolic order of the legal system, morality and established politics[101].

The rule, which is based on the continuum of power, legitimates the existing situation through historical structures. In discussing the eighth Thesis, it is relevant to examine the factual historical situation, which in this case was the emergence of the National Socialist regime. The creating a 'real' state of emergency refers to the battle against the National Socialists, and on a larger scale, the fascists. Benjamin criticises the Social Democrats for their inability to realise the actual situation. In other words, he did not consider the Social Democrats as 'politicians' in the sense of actualising the political *Geistesgegen-wart.* In the idea of the awareness of the present, Benjamin reverses Hegel's concept of the owl of Minerva. As opposed to Minerva, one should comment on events 'just before' they have happened, and not 'just after' they have passed (PW: 439). However, if the issue is thought in terms of concrete action or political judgement, these demands remain a piece of the puzzle of the *Theses.*

If we refer back to the *Trauerspiel* book, we find additional material with regard to the idea of state of *Ausnahmezustand.* In 1925, Benjamin states that the sovereign should, in Schmitt's words "decide" for the *Ausnahmezustand.* Carl Schmitt's concept, which in this context is formulated in his *Politische Theologie* as a figure of a sovereign who descides for the state of emergency (1922, *Souverän ist, wer über den Ausnahmezustand entscheidet*)[102] may still have influenced Benjamin's use of the concept in the eighth Thesis. In the *Trauerspiel,* Benjamin uses the Schmittian concept of sovereignty in emphasising the connection between decision making and the sovereignty, and also in highlighting the relationship between sovereign and tyrant (1925: 250-257). However, Benjamin uses the idea of the sovereign metaphorically, in the sense derived from the interpretation of the German Mourning plays. In the *Trauerspiel,* the figure of the sovereign is considered *incapable* of making decisions: "Der Fürst, bei dem die Entscheidung über den Ausnahmezustand ruht, erweist in der erstbesten Situation, daß ein Entschluß ihm fast unmöglich ist." (1925: 250)[103]

The reason for this inability is that as a result of having to rely on his own subjective experiences, the prince had lost his ability to make decisions. In this sense, the prince was also considered to have lost his sovereignty. Here, Benjamin sees the ability to make decisions as rooted in *experience,* not in legislative power, and he interprets the 'sovereign' in the situation of the *Neuzeit,* in which the historical source of previous experience was scattered. In this sense, the historical rupture in the baroque period launched an era, of which the clearest characteristic for Benjamin is the culmination and fulfilment of modernity at the end of the 19th century and during the inter-war era[104]. Benjamin sees the other peak in the individual or collective scattering of experiences as occurring directly after 1900. As I have interpreted above, this characterises a shift from *Erfahrung* towards more disconnected means of 'experiencing' as an *Erlebnis*[105].

With regard to the terms of historical representation or the creation of historical contingency, Benjamin explicitly distinguishes between the baroque and modern ideas of *Ausnahmezustand.* The baroque sovereign determines the order and also has the ability to exclude the possibility of *Ausnahmezustand,* while the modern figure is interpreted as an absolute figure (1925: 245-246)[106]. With regard to decision making, Benjamin sees, although he does not support Schmittian decisionism, *indecision* as increasing in the modern constitutional state. The problem lies in the question of how decision making itself can be seen as a sovereign act[107]. Benjamin's idea of modern sovereignty can be seen as balancing with questions, such as, how to act in a new and undetermined situation, or, how is it possible to gain a perspective on the new and unknown reality. In this sense, the idea of sovereignty is important in thinking about the present as a new and open field of experiences.

Again, combination of the ideas of historical contingency and the destruction of the 'continuous state of exception', is found in the critique of progress. In the later Theses, Benjamin's critique becomes solidified, as his critique of the Social Democratic Party is embedded in the idea of its deterministic historical progress. The metaphor that Benjamin presents in the beginning of the tenth Thesis is reminiscent of the setting in the first Thesis, in which theology and historical materialism are opponents in a game. In this case, however, the situation is reversed. In the situation at the end of the 1930s, it was obvious that the politicians, whom the opponents of Fascism were relying on, had been badly defeated, "...da die Politiker, auf die die Gegner des Faschismus gehofft hatten, am Boden liegen..." (1940: X), and the fallen ones, who had betrayed their own cause, refers to the mainstream of the German Left.

Following Benjamin, the elements which caused this 'defeat' were as follows; *Firstly,* blind faith in historical progress, which was automatically expected to compensate the warriors of this new political order, which was Weimarian democracy. *Secondly,* trust in the absolute reliability of the supporting troupes and confidence in their 'mass basis'. *Thirdly,* their servile integration with uncontrollable machinery. Benjamin's critique suggests breaking with the current course of events as fully realising the contingency in this historical limit situation. The openness to a new concept of history might free the 'political

child' (*das politische Weltkind*, 1940: X), which Benjamin sees as tied up in the network of the determinate idea of progress.

None of the extreme ideologies were able to finally win the game, as the game between theology and philosophy cannot be solved. The political child might be understood as a person who is restrained by the 'chains' of progress, which determine both action and thought, or perhaps as a reference to Benjamin's own self criticism or sense of helplessness in his own situation. Like the angelic figure in the ninth Thesis, who is helplessly unable to act, and instead only gazes at the ruins of history, the child is described as being incapable of taking action, and there is neither illusion of sovereignty, nor revolutionary action in sight. The allegory is reminiscent of Goethe's poem:

Und, wie nach Emmaus, weiter ging's
mit Sturm- und Feuerschritten:
Prophete links, Prophete rechts
Das Weltkind in der Mitten[108].

For Benjamin, the understanding of an automatically progressing history is descriptive of vulgar Marxist thought *par excellence*. As compared to the allegoric approach in the tenth Thesis, the eleventh Thesis is more explicit. Benjamin focuses on the Social Democratic emphasis on (fabric) work, which he compares to Protestant work ethic. The understanding of time and its similarities in both the Protestant work ethic and the labour work schedule are comparable in terms of repetition and standardisation: "die alte protestatische Werkmoral feierte in säkularisierter Gestalt bei den deutschen Arbeitern ihre Auferstehung." (1940: XI) In this way, the thirteenth Thesis repeats the dangers of the idea of the progress in Social Democratic theory and praxis. They are as follows; *firstly*, the danger of the progress of mankind itself, which is expressed through a universal conception of history. *Secondly*, the danger of understanding progress as limitless, which is compared to the theological and religious views on the eternal and absolute conceptions of time. *Thirdly*, the danger of an automatic and deterministic concept of historical progress. The 'empty' ideas of development and its universality produces a suitable illusion for politicians, which is the basis for the slogans on progress and a better future. To act against this course of time by diffusing the temporal linearity implies an intention to confuse the hypothetical course of history, or to take time into one's 'own hands'.

The emergence of the historical limit situation would reverse the situation that Benjamin characterises in the eight Thesis. Due to its temporal structure, this exceptional situation would temporally and spatially fall into the 'outer sphere' of the linear course of history. Here, one could view the image of history as presented in roughly two ways: on the one hand, it shows the emphasis on progress, continuum and logical cause of the previous history, the exception that has become the rule. On the other hand, the alternative concept of history is embedded in the contingent battle between the past and the future. The 'real' *Ausnahmezustand* would be included in the situation, in which

Benjamin introduces the moment of Now *(Jetztzeit)* in challenging the previous course of history, and also as considering more radical way of interrupting it. The Now-time includes the sphere in the border of history and nothingness. This is actually one of the points that connects the past and the present by creating an opening for a New time, neither completely separate from nor strictly bound to any existing experience.

12. ANGELUS NOVUS

The metaphor of Paul Klee's painting *Angelus Novus* is probably the best known and most often quoted part of Benjamin's *Theses*. The painting, which was made in 1920, and which Benjamin bought the following year, is often used as the metaphor of the whole 'image of history' that is presented in the Theses[109]. It is true that *Angelus Novus* is an important part of Benjamin's idea of history, although it only represents one side of it. Additionally, the reflection of an image at this point is interesting, as despite many allusions to images, the *Angelus* is the only concrete image in the *Theses*.

A further connection that stresses the importance of the *Angelus* is Benjamin's relationship to Gershom Scholem, as the ninth Thesis appears more strongly connected to Benjamin's personal life than any of the other Theses. In the beginning, and as replacing the motto, Benjamin quotes a part of Scholem's poem *Gruß vom Angelus,*[110] sent to Benjamin in October of 1933. The way in which the angel is used as an allegoric figure, raised form the storm of 'progressive history', includes both Benjamin's personal reference to Jewish history and the link to Scholem.

In Klee's painting, the angel is presented with its eyes wide open. According to Benjamin, it is scared of what it sees in its inverted view[111]. The back of the angel is facing towards the future, although it is powerless against the storm of progress in that direction. Benjamin describes the angel as if it longs to remain present for a while, actualising historical redemption by awakening death and reconstructing the destroyed past. This is not possible, as the angel appears as powerless against the ever speeding Chronos[112]. The previous course of history is presented before the eyes of the angel. In this sense, the image is posed in a rather similar fashion to that of the historian as a 'backwards turned prophet', which was discussed in the seventh Thesis. However, in the seventh Thesis, the question was about the identifying nature of historiography and its implica-

tions for the concept of history. Here, the angel does not represent any appearance that can be identified with. On the contrary, it is an alienating figure, who does not perceive of history as following any course. Whereas in the common view on history we perceive of a chain of events, the angel sees only a single catastrophe (1940: XIX).

At this point Benjamin follows Judaic thought, which represents the idea of the progress as catastrophic. The notion that history simply progresses, *daß es so weiter geht,* in the form of the destructive Chronos, describes the catastrophic situation in itself. In both the draft of the *Theses* and the *Zentralpark,* the temporality of Benjamin's notion of catastrophe is characterised not as waiting in front *(bevorstehende),* but as already given *(jeweils gegebene)*. In this, Benjamin combines the idea of catastrophe with Strindberg's conception of hell: "Die Hölle ist nichts, was uns bevorstunde sondern dieses Leben hier." (GS VII.2: 676, cf. GS I: 683) Combining these two thoughts, Benjamin creates an image of the modern era, in which the continuous understanding of history and the persistent idea of progress merge together into the repetitive time of hell of the present: "Das 'Moderne' die Zeit der Hölle." (PW: 676)

If the temporal image is discussed from the view created through catastrophic thinking, the idea reverses the Christian idea of God's Kingdom – or Paradise Lost. The destructive storm of progress that is intended to carry the Christian people to paradise, is described here as doing exactly the opposite, as it actually drives the people away from the promised land. The wind blows with the same force as the idea of progress that detaches people from their present and immediate experiences. According to Rolf Tiedemann, the storm does not actually happen in the present, but rather remains in the open future. The angel describes the message that is to be opened and solved over the course of history[113]. The Jewish messianic idea, if it is connected to Benjamin's conception of redemption, is again well-presented through the angelic figure. I consider that Benjamin includes that piece of his own history of thinking to the structure of the Thesis because of its connection to the Jewish theological origins. However, he is simultaneously portraying his own historico-political context. Benjamin not only approaches the idea of progress on a theoretical or historical level, but he also expresses the problem of the temporal storm of Chronos as causing mental and intellectual laziness. Being inspired by Marcel Proust, he uses the metaphor of awakening as a counter-concept, which negates the progressive and universal idea of time

"Aber jeder Tag löst mit dem zweckgebundenen Handeln und, noch mehr, mit zweckverhaftetem Erinnern das Geflecht, die Ornamente des Vergessens auf." (1929b: 311) This outlines the dialectics between remembrance and forgetting in becoming an important topic in Benjamin's new concept of history. In *Zum Bilde Prousts*, Benjamin notices that the text *(textum)* means actually a web. Not only the most obvious and visible aspects of history are present in the historical text, but the 'ornaments of forgetting' are also webbed in it (1929b: 311-312) Because these ornaments are embedded in the historical textum as the other side of remembrance, it is possible to actualise these forgotten aspects[114]. Unfolding the inner structures of history by interpreting a

single event, requires an approach that regards events as singular and detached from the homogeneously conceived course of history.

The reading of an event focuses both on the written, obvious and visible and on the unwritten, and in some ways also on reading the other invisible aspects included in the *Schrift*, as it was discussed in the chapters *On Text and Quotation* and *Conceptualising the Images of the Past*. In the act of awakening, the aspect of the forgotten brings something more to the understanding of history, and eventually to the understanding of the present and its further documentation. The awakening further illustrates the consciousness that connects these traces from history to the present insight. History is described as a kind of recollection; "only the *actus purus* (pure action) of recollection itself, not the author or the plot, constitutes the unity of the text" (1929b: 312). Benjamin uses this interplay between forgetting and remembering as a textual web of reality, which is never finalised by an author him or herself, but which remains open in the reading of historical texts.

On the whole, the ninth Thesis presents an image, which brings the otherwise dynamically comprehended movement of time to a standstill. It is the state of *erstarrte Unruhe*, as illustrated through the angel (cf. PW: 414). Still, despite Benjamin's specific temporal idea, Konersmann's critique is legitimated, as he notices that here, Benjamin presents temporality only conventionally. According to Konersmann, temporality is formed in a horizontal line, in which the past is spatially positioned in the 'back', and the sphere of the future in the 'front'[115]. This is true, if it is read with the notion, that this is not the only temporal appearance in the *Theses*.

The ninth Thesis also shows that Benjamin's critique of progress is not absolute, as he creates a new temporal space in his examination of the idea. Criticising the idea of progress as moving linearly towards eternity, Benjamin notes that (scientific) progress is still possible, if it describes the first step towards a 'better understanding' of any researched phenomena. However, 'better' is not to be understood as an evaluative concept based on cumulative knowledge of an object. Instead, it signifies a change in perspective, or a new approach to the object. The concept of progress within a critical historical theory should restrict itself to only interpreting the short time-span between an event and its occurrence, and the moments in which it opens a perspective towards something 'new'. The possibility of distinguishing an historical event from the continuum of time and approaching it from a new perspective, is based on understanding events as existing independently from each other. The temporal interpretation becomes the means of forming the way in which these events are seen as related to each other. The value of an event is not included in the progressive character of an event in relation to other events, but it is valued in itself, as purely singular. This modifies Leibniz's idea of the monad, used in various parts of Benjamin's work[116].

13. TEMPORAL 'TIGERSPRUNG' AS REVOLUTION

XIV

Ursprung ist das Ziel.
Karl Kraus, Worte in Versen I

Die Geschichte ist Gegenstand einer Konstruktion, deren Ort nicht die homogene und leere Zeit sondern die von Jetztzeit erfüllte bildet. So war für Robespierre das antike Rom eine mit Jetztzeit geladene Vergangenheit, die er aus dem Kontinuum der Geschichte heraussprengte. Die französische Revolution verstand sich als ein wiedergekehrtes Rom. Sie zitierte das alte Rom genau so wie die Mode eine vergangene Tracht zitiert. Die Mode hat die Witterung für das Aktuelle, wo immer es sich im Dickicht des Einst bewegt. Sie ist der Tigersprung ins Vergangene. Nur findet er in einer Arena statt, in der die herrschende Klasse kommandiert. Derselbe Sprung unter dem freien Himmel der Geschichte ist der dialektische als den Marx die Revolution begriffen hat.

In the fourteenth Thesis, Benjamin introduces for the first time his concept of the Now-time *(Jetztzeit)* as a counter concept to the historicist understanding of time. He signifies the meaning of Now as being "filled" with subjective experience, and this subjective aspect is connected to the acknowledgement of the Now-time. Also, the difference between the beginning and later parts of the *Theses* become clearer at this point. Namely, in the beginning of the *Theses*,

Benjamin's critique of the homogeneous temporality of history was constructed through the idea of redemption, whereas towards the end, the figure of the Now-time seems both to combine the earlier elements and to compose a concept that creates a *new passage to ways of understanding time* through a singular moment. As Benjamin criticises the concept of time, which is comprehended as being devoid of subjective experience, he also recalls issues from his essay *Über das Programm der kommenden Philosophie* (1918) and the critique of Kantian and Neokantian concepts of experience.

The emphasis on subjective experience is constructed as a critique of subject/object distinction, deriving from the natural scientific and mechanistic world views from the end of the 17th century, after Newton published his universal laws of celestial mechanics. As the mechanical world view was established, it was not thoroughly challenged before Einstein's theory of relativity. Through the mechanistic and reductionist view of science, the universe appears to be an unchanging whole, approachable by ideas such as progress, which would make the universe procedurally comprehensible[117]. In my view, Benjamin's critique of historicism and progress is an important conceptual counterpart to his concept of the Now. The new temporal moment of Now is deciphered both as the negation of the homogenous or mechanistic conception time, and as the negation of the punctual moment of Now, which had been conceptualised in the linearly understood course of time since Aristotle's *Physics*[118].

The rupture in time happens synchronically with the Now-time consciousness. This describes a heterogeneous and temporal limit-situation, which is primarily sketched in the eighth Thesis. The new interpretations of time and history are here connected to the idea of the opening of a temporal perspective, characterised specifically through the Now-time experience. The new experience implies a parallel opening for an individual space of action, which Benjamin calls, although quite fragmentarily, the Now-being (*Jetztsein,* PW: 495) The movement towards historical awakening emerges in the Jetztzeit, as the action is derived from the experience of this moment, and the temporal originality of the *Jetztzeit* lies in how it is understood in relation to past and future times.

What is so curious about the moment of Now, is that it cannot be solely interpreted on the basis of already existing categorisations of temporal dimensions of the past, present or future. It is a non-synthetic image of time, which emphasises the newness and the creative moment of time, and which can also be expanded towards aesthetic interpretation of temporality of works of art or art history. The network of temporal experiences that the Now-time connects is more understandable in connection with the other concepts related to the present than those describing past experiences. This is one reason why it is important to conceptualise a temporal field in discussing the various experiences of time connected to the present, and in uncovering their meaning through this specifically temporalized view.

In the ordinary discussion of historical time, the concepts that characterise

the present situation in its *own terms* are absent. Because of this, I have chosen, although mainly in other parts of this book, to use some aesthetic examples, such as cinema and photography, to expand the temporal view. For instance, the Russian film director Dziga Vertov worked with the idea of mediating the perception and experience of the present time through the cinematic principle. He attempted to invite his audience, who were gathered to view the moving images of the Russian *Agit-Train*, to experience life 'as it is', from the standpoint of the 'film truth' principle and the 'film eye' method. Vertov's principle of *Kino pravda*, the film truth, which was consciously constructed against Hollywood illusory cinema, achieved the French translation of *Cinema Vérité*, which is also well known outside of the history of cinema[119].

Vertov concentrated on the appearance of freeze-frames, which in motion pictures emphasises the perceptual distinction between still and motion photography. The perceptual clash created by juxtaposing freeze-frames and motion pictures projected consecutively on the screen, points to the fact that the cinematic vision can be expanded by modern technology in order to provide a deeper insight in the external world. In working with the cinema, Vertov constructed concepts to describe the relation between movement and time, such as condensed time, negative of time (reversed time), paralysed time, fractured time or close-up of time[120]. In my view, the concepts may also be used as examples in an attempt to re-conceptualise the relations between the present, time and experience, also in a philosophical sense.

As I interpret Benjamin's idea of temporality as cairologic, the approach emphasises breaks, ruptures, non-synchronised moments and multiple temporal dimensions. It brings forth qualitative differences in time, as they have the possibility to become actualised through experiences, actions or acknowledgement of the subject in temporally changing situations. The variety of moments, which include experience and action, produce a different view on time and its dimensions than the one approached from the chronologically ordered perspective of history as a temporal course. Following Benjamin, the present and its experiences are temporarily 'frozen' in any historical or current material and phenomena. This 'condensed time' creates another perspective on time, which is parallel to continuity or constant movement, and these moments of temporal insight are possible to decipher as 'seeds of present'.

In the fourteenth Thesis, parallel to his discussion on the idea of the *Jetztzeit*, Benjamin uses the metaphor of a 'tiger's leap' into the past *(Tigersprung ins Vergangene)*. This example actualises a confrontation between two historical events, in this case, the French revolution and ancient Rome, as a 'reversed time'[121]. In Benjamin's thought-image, the revolution becomes actualised in a way in which the peaks of the experiences of the two epochs in question were considered, as confronting a Now-time in Robespierre's experience. On the other hand, the thought-image of ancient Rome was re-produced in the historical consciousness during time of the French Revolution as a recurrence of Rome *(wiedergekehrtes Rome)*. Through the *Tigersprung*, the period of time in between these two epochs vanishes, and especially the idea of Rome becomes

described as a space of experience in late 18th century France[122]. This dialectical confrontation destroys both a presupposed temporal rule and the order between the epochs, creating an entirely new one.

According to Benjamin, the revolution makes a *Zeitraffer* in history[123], as it introduces a new calendar (1940: XV). Revolution metaphorizes the beginning of the *new temporal* order in the form of a new calendar, which symbolises the beginning of a new epoch. However, calendar time is not objective in the same sense as clock-time, since it not only measures time daily, weekly and yearly, but also marks memorial dates, the victories and defeats of wars, and national or religious holidays. This also makes calendar time an aspect of political time, in that it is a document of monumental history of preserving the mythos of the winners of history. The question that remains is, who has the power to choose what days are important enough to be celebrated, to break up the schedule of work and leisure days?

However, Benjamin does not see the beginning of the Neuzeit to characterise qualitative progress in the understanding of historical time. Rather, it reduces it to the idea of eternal recurrence: "Und es ist im Grunde genommen derselbe Tag, der in Gestalt der Feiertage, die Tage des Eingedenkens sind, immer wiederkehren." (1940: XV) As Benjamin notes, the issue of the temporal recurrence of the new characterises the 'Hell of modernity'. This is one of the reasons why Benjamin describes the idea of historical consciousness as beginning its course of decline during the *Neuzeit*.

The *Zeitraffer*, which is commonly seen as shifting towards the idea of progress within the scope of the industrial, economic, scientific or historical meanings, was for Benjamin, regressive, since it homogenised the nature of time (cf. GS 1.3: 1250). The exception in this regression was the short moment during the July revolution, in which the clocks *(Turmuhren)* were destroyed. This shows how Benjamin constantly detaches himself from empirical time-consciousness, which is one reason why his *Theses* are difficult to decipher[124]. However, the act of shooting the clocks during the July Revolution combines the political action with a symbolic act, which touches the core of human temporal experience as a 'fractured time'. When time is stopped, the chain is broken, and this appears to manifest a rupture in a specific period of history. It could be said that, for Benjamin, the whole identification with the quantitative time-consciousness, whether by clock or by calendar, is one way of one way of escaping the more profound understanding of time.

14. REVERSED DIALECTICS

As shown in the previous examples, Benjamin connects the historically reversed temporal leaps to dialectical materialism: "Derselbe Sprung unter dem freien Himmel der Geschichte ist der dialektische, als den Marx die Revolution begriffen hat." (1940: XIV) This means that the revolutionary potential is primarily directed towards the past, as opposed to the future. Only through this de-constructive event of retrieving historical knowledge from the interpretative canon, can the 'new history' that emerges from the Now-time consciousness, be seen as progressive.

Using the concept of dialectics in interpreting the phenomena already began to cause Benjamin much trouble in his writings after the 1930s. This was culminated by Adorno's sharp criticism concerning Benjamin's *Exposé* for *Das Passagen-Werk* and his first draft of the *Baudelaire*, which affected the way to read Benjamin's interpretation of Baudelaire throughout the decades. Adorno claimed, for instance, that Benjamin thought non-dialectically, or that his dialectics did not contain an aspect of mediation (*Vermittlung*). This was considered the moment in which Benjamin's dialectics appeared to fail. Adorno criticised Benjamin's interpretation for not mediating between social superstructure and substructure, arguing that the only reasonable way to handle the structures was to put them into a causal and immediate connection with each other. This could be done through an interpretation of a total process: "Die materialistische Determination kultureller Charactere ist möglich nur vermittelt durch die Gesamtprozeß." (Br. 785) This thematization of the total process was the component that Adorno missed in Benjamin's work.

The central points of Adorno's critique have been repeated many times, especially his accusation that Benjamin's interpretation on Baudelaire was practised in a crossing point of magic and positivism (Br. 786). I wish to present some of the points of Adorno's critique here, not in discussing their accuracy concerning Benjamin's work, but in an attempt to specify the temporality

of Benjamin's dialectics. It is true that the mediation between superstructure and substructure did not seem to interest Benjamin. Nor was he interested in presenting his work in relation to a total process, which becomes especially clear after studying his concept of history. Benjamin followed his own methods and constructed his own specific terminology, without feeling a need to define it in more specific terms, which would have explained his use of Marxist vocabulary. In Benjamin's written reply to Adorno's critique, he describes his method as genuinely philological *(echte philologische Methode)*, and claims to have already constructed it in the *Trauerspiel* (GS I.3: 1103; Br. 793, 342). Additionally, Benjamin's need to collect material, which he would interpret both through his philological view, became merged in his task of critique, as discussed in my introduction chapter.

The image *par excellence* in describing the difference between the dialectic ideas of Adorno and Benjamin is the famous angel from the ninth Thesis. As Arendt writes, "nothing could be more 'undialectic' than this attitude, in which the 'angel of history' (...) does not dialectically move forward into the future, but has his face 'turned toward the past'. (...)That such thinking should ever have bothered with a consistent, dialectically sensible, rationally explainable process seems absurd"[125]. However, if one wishes to understand Benjamin's temporal idea, this image can be seen as especially characteristic of his dialectics.

Firstly, the angel shows the face of the failed dialectical conception of history. For Benjamin, the progress that blows the angel backwards into the future represents the winds of regression. In this point, as I have often mentioned, Benjamin wishes to see the caesura, as he expresses by the words that the angel "would like to stay" (1940: IX). In other words, Benjamin's dialectical idea is that of a temporal *Stillstand*. Only in this standstill, in the disruption of continuity and linearity, it would be possible to create a space for an historical or political critique in the Benjaminian sense.

All of this implies that Benjamin's dialectics are not conceived of as a confrontation between the old and the new, but are the joining of the experiences of Now and Then. This might appear to be a minor notion, yet if the point of the interpretation is the *temporality*, and not the orthodoxy of Benjamin's concept, then this notion changes the entire setting. Both Adorno's critique of Benjamin's 1935 *Exposé*, and the explicit and implicit followers of this interpretation failed to take his specific temporal distinctions into account[126]. Following Adorno's interpretation, the mixture between the old and the new were commonly characterised in Benjamin's work as *phantasmagoria*, and not as a dialectical image. For Benjamin, the phantasmagoric or dream images of history would lead to the repetition of the bourgeois conception of culture, and not its liberation in terms of Marxist dialectics. The confrontation that Benjamin characterised in the moment between the Now and the Then was a dialectical image, which was later followed by the idea of the *Jetztzeit*.

If the aspect of the future was included in this temporal dialectic, it would contain an utopian aspect. However, the idea of utopia was intentionally excluded from Benjamin's dialectics when the focus was on the present condition. Benjamin's dialectical image was constructed as an opposite viewpoint to uto-

pian Marxism, since it was necessary to find an interpretation of history that would interrupt the repetitive mythos or phantasm of the previous century. The progressive dialectic course, which Arendt refers to as a "consistent, dialectically sensible, rationally explainable process", was, according to Benjamin, excluding the present experiences, leading towards catastrophic thinking.

It is impossible to speculate on why Benjamin never made his temporal distinctions explicit, even though they were so important to his conceptions of politics and history. In the early *Programm* essay, Benjamin had already begun to search for the possibility of non-synthesis (*Nicht-Synthesis* 1918: 166), which can be conceived of as parallel to the moment of disruption in his later works. Because of the fluent nature of this notion in Benjamin's *Programm* essay, many commentaries on the essay have argued in favour of not taking this point too seriously. Still, I prefer to take the risk of seeing the early notion as important, despite its fragmentary presentation, as it suggests expanding the temporal perspective out of Hegelian-Marxist dialectical thinking.

The notion of *Nicht-Synthesis* might be understood as a search for an horizon, or as an opening in the determined and closed concept of historical dialectics. As an opening, and also as a possibility to cause a rupture within the dialectical concept of history, the idea of non-synthesis can be understood as a new temporal perspective in redefining the history. *Nicht-Synthesis* includes the notions of the known as well as the unknown, as the meaning of an historical event in this sense cannot be pre-categorised or planned. It creates an alternative to reinterpreting earlier events by approaching them from the present perspective, and reordering them in relation to their past and future.

The temporal 'movement', through which the events are interpreted from the stable idea of historical linearity (or dialectics) towards the unknown, can also preliminary be interpreted as a *moment towards politics*, as it breaks the monopolistic power of the Chronos. The shift towards the non-chronological interpretation of historical time includes the aspects of action and reaction on the stage of history. Returning to the idea in Jewish Messianism, and to the possible break in the course of linear history, the political moment destroys the aspects of unity, as the idea of the historical *Gesamtprozeß* is scattered in its temporal impossibility.

If the possibility of *Nicht-Synthesis* were to be documented, it would connect this idea of the temporal course with something unexpected. The possibility of contingency, conflict and uncontrollability are suddenly present here, but they do not appear as empty and abstract. Instead of ignoring the possibilities of non-synthesis, this 'fourth' dialectical step could be brought into the present as an active and constitutive moment, including a political perspective as the *politicisation of the situation*[127]. The past events, which are theoretically or immediately brought into the present, diffuse the one-dimensional understanding of history. Theoretically, these two approaches of the reconciliatory or non-reconciliatory conceptions of historical dialectics do not negate each other, but rather, 'complete' the view on history.

Consequently, Benjamin's *Copernican change* of shifting the view from history towards politics, emphasises the aspect of politics as a category of thinking that is primarily located in the present (PW: 490-91). These 'categories of

thinking' are to be constructed in the moment in which the view on the qualitative understanding of the present time is created. The new thinking cannot emerge only by being conciliated by the former conception of history, nor does the turn lead to any systematic or universal category of time. Instead, the shift towards new categories of temporal thinking emphasises the nature of historical interpretations as temporary, completing the as yet incomplete interpretations in every present.

The question of *how* the aspects of time and temporality can be conceived of through a non-synthetic historical moment, remains open for the future. If one imagines the flow of time and history in the manner of the Hegelian *Weltgeschichte,*[128] the ideal process of history is seen as progressive and continuous, meaningful and rational. Why replace it with an idea that might not seem meaningful and appears as far from rational? As connected to the beginning part of the *Theses,* Benjamin outlines the idea of redemption, which offers a critical moment in thinking about history. Only through this critique are the inner connections between events and their interpretations productive for the new understanding of the present. As Benjamin quotes Kraus in the 14th Thesis, *Ursprung is das Ziel,* the origins of thought are understood as the aim and the truth, which are embedded in the discovery of the origins of the present. This can only become obvious through the destruction of the linear and continuous understanding of history, whether it is done through the idea of critique, or through historical-philosophical redemption *(Erlösung).* The so called revolutionary leaps of time should be combined with the future history in order to create a critical historical constellation.

I consider the critique as being part of Benjamin's immanent critique in his specific historical context, as well as a critique through which the historical ideas of time might be redefined. Especially in his political thought and the critique of the concept of history, Benjamin does not intend to interpret the continuity of the idealistic historical process in Marxist terms, but considers revolutionary action possible only as a rupture in the linear process. The idea of revolution seems inherent to the understanding of history, and the possible ruptures in its linear course might actualise the revolutionary potential. Benjamin metaphorically "pulls the emergency break" as he opens the present time into various forms of experience, none of which are directly aimed towards the future: "Marx sagt, die Revolutionen sind die Lokomotive der Weltgeschichte. Aber vielleicht ist dem gänzlich anders. Vielleicht sind die Revolutionen der Griff des in diesem Zuge reisenden Menschengeschlechts nach der Notbremse." (GS 1.3: 1232)

Generally, I agree with Gagnebin's interpretation, according to which Benjamin included a demand for the Marxist theory to overcome the understanding of the dialectics in the form of Lukácsian "domination of totality over the singular"[129], and instead, to shatter this totality. Benjamin's scepticism about the dialectics, in the way in which they were understood in the beginning of the century, is profoundly connected to his scepticism towards the idea of totality. However, Benjamin's notion on the *Nicht-Synthesis* might also be read as being in opposition to the over-emphasised concept of the dialectics in his own historical context.

15. DIALECTICS AT A STANDSTILL

'Reading' history from the perspective of single events leads to the creation of a dialectical standstill *(Dialektik im Stillstand)*. This again outlines the importance of 'reading' the larger contexts and concepts through single events, which are not ordered in a chronological narrative. The search for this standstill is characteristically connected to Benjamin's specific interpretation of 'reversed' dialectics.

Viewed from the perspective of their cessation, the dialectics create the possibility for the *Jetztzeit* experience. Benjamin notes that, within the context of his 'historical materialism', the basic concept of history is not progress, but rather, *actualisation,* which again describes the shift from homogeneous time towards a punctual and cairologic approach to the temporal course (PW: 574). Both the past and historical documents become actualised in the interpreter's reflective attitude. The concepts of the past and of history have different forms of experience than their meanings imply, and the idea of the singularity of events causes a rupture in the interpretation, which cannot be approached by accumulating facts on top of other facts.

In the context of the 16th Thesis, I would like to include fragments from *Das Passagen-Werk* and reflect further on what the conception of the dialectics in a standstill, might mean. Firstly, the image *(Bild)* is the space and place in which the *Gewesne* and *Jetzt* (Then and Now) are intended to confront each other, as the dialectics of time are presented as coming to a standstill in the image (PW: 576-577). But how, then, should the 'dialectic nature' of the image be understood? As I noted above, Benjamin uses the concept of the dialectics rather freely, but he does specify the distinction of Hegelian dialectics. To specify this I interpret the following long quotation.

> Zum dialektischen Bilde. In ihm steckt die Zeit. Sie steckt schon bei Hegel in der Dialektik. Diese Hegelsche Dialektik kennt aber die Zeit nur als eigentlich historische, wenn nicht psychologische, Denkzeit. Das Zeitdiffe-

> rential, in dem allein das dialektische Bild wirklich ist, ist ihm noch nicht bekannt. (...) Die reale Zeit geht in das dialektische Bild nicht in natürliche Größe – geschweige denn psychologisch – sondern in ihrer kleinsten Gestalt ein. – Ganz läßt sich das Zeitmoment im dialektischen Bilde nur mittels der Konfrontation mit einem andern Begriffe ermitteln. Dieser Begriff ist das "Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit" (PW: 1037-1038).

Benjamin notes that the idea of time, which is said to 'freeze' in a dialectical image, is already included in the Hegelian dialectics. But this mode of dialectics only acknowledge time as historical, and partly as psychological, as mental time. Conversely, the emphasis on the singular moment in time not only makes the dialectics possible, but also includes the interruption in the temporal course. The counterpart of the past moment is again the recognised Now or the Now of Intelligibility *(Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit)*. Actually, Benjamin distinguishes here between 'historical time' and history as a constellation of temporal moments, and for him, the understanding of time itself begins from a moment 'filled' with experience.

In order to maintain the element of disruption and difference in the temporal understanding, moments are conceived of as entities, and the interpretation of historical connections and their attributes are made through the individual who experiences the moments in their own times and spaces. The idea of the 'moment in time' might be more easily understood through the reference to Leibniz's monad, as it is explained in the 17th Thesis: "Wo das Denken in einer von Spannungen gesättigten Konstellation plötzlich einhält, da erteilt es derselben einen Chock, durch den es sich als Monade kristallisiert."(1940: XVII)[130]

The purpose of finding this constellation of thought, in which the moments are recognised in the Now of Intelligibility, points towards the revision of history, since the emphasis on the moment, in terms of revolutionary thinking enables the 'fight' for anything that is suppressed. The experience of *Jetztzeit* can be understood as similar to the Leibizian monad, in which the acknowledgement begins from the moments themselves as related to a subject, and are not caused by exterior events[131]. As they confront each other, these moments seem to crystallise into the search for a specific experience of time through the point of Now. The temporal experience in question also includes the experiencing subject/agent, in which the temporal confrontation of Now and Then is present in his or her consciousness. This causes the historical space to open up, allowing it to be reinterpreted not objectively, but as connected to the individual interpretation. The way to which a single event and an individual are removed from the universal categories, creates the 'origins' of a new temporal experience.

Benjamin includes the origins of the whole experience now with confrontation between the experiencing actor and the temporal moment. The 'dialectic' oppose the Hegelian 'movement of history', as it is characterised in terms that are confined to synthesis. In Hegelian terms, the historical phase is possible to examine only 'after' closed synthetic interpretation. For Benjamin, this interpretation would never be possible, since Benjamin's dialectic is not only that

reconciliation. As discussed above, history can also include the aspect of the unknown, in the concept of the *Nicht-Synthesis.*[132] I see it as creating an approach to the other 'temporal order', which unfolds the elements of the contingency, but is still embedded in history. This could be understood as forming a dialectical idea between a Kairos and the element of the destructive Chronos, as expressed by Hegel[133]. The interplay between destruction and creation, characterised in these terms, forms the direction towards cairology.

In his search for a break in the temporal or historical structure, Benjamin actually creates a new form of historical or political experience[134]. In his last Theses, Benjamin's thoughts concerning the present time and its relation to the Now-time are the most apparent, as he does not comprehend the present simply as a passage in time, but rather correlates it with the idea of consciousness as brought to a standstill. However, this also perpetuates a standstill in reading Benjamin, since his temporal reflections do not exceed the moment of the Now. In my interpretation, I characterise this moment as a beginning of the qualitative understanding of time, which is signified through the reflection between the subjective and objective views of time, and the *cairology*.

Regardless of who names the epochs or historical periods as modern, classic or ancient, the fact remains that the current perspective creates varying constellations with the past epochs, possibly mixing them with utopian views of the future. The constellations change based on which parts of the epoch are seen as important and which as marginal, as is the case with new fashions, the epochs are in a constant process of creation. This view is reminiscent of Baudelaire's thought on modernity, as it does not try to define history. Moreover, it is a constantly questioning and redefining approach, emphasising the relativity of time and history.

Keeping with this actuality, the critique of the traditional historical view on time is not the aim in itself, but, as is noted in Benjamin's 17th Thesis, it includes a basis for the "new-construction – reconstruction-task" (1940: XVII; PW: 597). The critical moment of a materialist concept of history becomes apparent in the way how and if it differentiates itself from historical continuity. From the perspective of seeing history as universal, it is difficult to visualise a singular object as separate from its context. But the idea of visualising the past comes to offer an alternative to the linear approach. In this, Benjamin turns to the idea of 'showing', as opposed to narrating history. In Benjamin, the return towards showing history is expressed, as the method of *Das Passagen-Werk*, in which he does not want to narrate, but show history: "Ich habe nichts zu sagen, nur zu zeigen." (PW 574)

This turn primarily moves backwards in history, relating to the idea of the visualisation of history in the baroque era. Yet, Benjamin also applies the principle towards the end of the 20th century, in which events have become increasingly visual, although at this point rather through technical means than by allegoric images. Benjamin's further transformation towards the visualisation is apparent in the *Kunstwerk* essay, but in the *Theses,* this connection remains only implicit.

Now, the next task will be to 'explode' the historical continuum: "...das Kontinuum der Geschichte aufzusprengen." (1940: XVI) This suggestion of finding an alternative to an historical continuum is sketched in the form of three basic aphorias (GS I.3. 1236):

1. *Firstly*, the continuum of history is understood as the continuum of the oppressive power. The 'rulers' as Benjamin interprets the matter, seem to understand history as a continuum of chosen events.

2. *Secondly*, the history of the suppressed people is understood as discontinuous. Because no "submitted" class, group or minority possesses any continuous history of their own that could be called their tradition, this being one of the distinguishing factors between the group and mainstream or any cultural centre – it is especially important to notice the specific importance of the discontinuation of history.

3. *Thirdly*, to conceive of the conception of the tradition as a discontinuum with the past, as opposed to the continuity of events. What is important and new here, is the separation between tradition and events. The consciousness of the historical course is supposed to characterise revolutionary action.

The history of the marginalised is not officially preserved in textbooks, but can be found in archives, or as a series of fragments or private collections. It could also be found in the form of written diaries, letters or novels, as it is conserved as an official document of history[135]. The problem, however, is that any group that collects, finds and constructs its own history, begins to see itself, following Benjamin's vocabulary, as becoming the salvation of future generations. As a political illusion this was, in Benjamin's view, the mistake of the Social Democrats during the Weimar Republic. Attaining governmental power implied that the previous opposition stepped in to the 'historical continuum of power', thus scattering their revolutionary potential (*breaking the Sehne ihrer Kraft*, GS I.3: 1237).

16. CONSTRUCTION OF HISTORY

XVII

Der Historismus gipfelt von rechtswegen in der Universalgeschichte. Von ihr hebt die materialistische Geschichtsschreibung sich methodisch vielleicht deutlicher als von jeder andern ab. Die erstere hat keine theoretische Armatur. Ihr Verfahren ist additiv: sie bietet die Masse der Fakten auf, um die homogene und leere Zeit auszufüllen. Der materialistischen Geschichtsschreibung ihrerseits liegt ein konstruktives Prinzip zugrunde. Zum Denken gehört nicht nur die Bewegung der Gedanken sondern ebenso ihre Stillstellung. Wo das Denken in einer von Spannungen gesättigten Konstellation plötzlich einhält, da erteilt es derselben einen Chock, durch den es sich als Monade kristallisiert. Der historische Materialist geht an einen geschichtlichen Gegenstand einzig und allein da heran, wo er ihm als Monade entgegentritt. In dieser Struktur erkennt er das Zeichen einer messianischen Stillstellung des Geschehens, anders gesagt, einer revolutionären Chance im Kampfe für die unterdrückte Vergangenheit. Er nimmt sie wahr, um eine bestimmte Epoche aus dem homogenen Verlauf der Geschichte herauszusprengen; so sprengt er ein bestimmtes Leben aus der Epoche, so ein bestimmtes Werk aus dem Lebenswerk. Der Ertrag seines Verfahrens besteht darin, daß *im* Werk das Lebenswerk, *im* Lebenswerk die Epoche und *in* der Epoche der gesamte Geschichtsverlauf aufbewahrt ist und aufgehoben. Die nahrhafte Frucht des historisch Begriffenen hat die Zeit als den kostbaren, aber des Geschmacks entratenden Samen in ihrem *Innern.*

The Benjaminian method is revealed here in a way that could be compared to the *Vorrede of Trauerspiel*, not as methodically self-evident, but rather as innovative[136]. In the 14th Thesis, Benjamin introduces the idea of the construction of history: "Die Geschichte ist Gegenstand einer Konstruktion." (1940: XIV) This is followed by the notion in the 17th Thesis on materialistic historiography, which is based on a constructive principle. The idea of the construction of history shapes a methodological approach, which is also common to Benjamin's idea of historiography in *Das Passagen-Werk*. The construction principle in Benjamin's thought most clearly originates from the aesthetic avant-garde, especially in Russian architecture, painting and film from 1917-1930's. It is obvious that Benjamin was acquainted with Russian constructivism, and he named Eisenstein's montage explicitly as one of his methodological points of approach in *Das Passagen-Werk* (PW: 572, 574)[137].

The concept of construction *(Konstruktion)* was in 19th century architecture as an alternative to more traditional architecture. In constructivist architecture, the basic material for a building is built in a way that seems to have no connection to earlier material form. The previous constructive elements are destroyed and connected with new elements. The constructivist principle leaves the inner space of the building open, as architecture is connected, in this 'constructive' sense, to the rebuilding of society. In architectural constructivism, the world is given to us through touch and through materials, which affect both our visual and tactile perception. One 'leader' of this movement was Tatlin, with his design called the *Monument to the third international* (1920)[138]. Other examples of the early constructivist architecture are the well-known well-known Eiffel Tower and the avant-garde projects of the 1920's by El Lissitzky.

Young architects set a goal for themselves achieving synthesis between the utilitarian task and architectural concepts of space, which was also used as a critique of the older generations. Compared to America, where an architect had a direct relationship with technology, in Russia it was impossible to have such urban complexes as in Paris or Berlin. Nevertheless, Russian architects wanted to introduce the modern methods of building and construction, in which the designs of both the formalists and the constructivists were seen as radically experimental in the manipulation of construction. However, many of the projects remained only utopistic, and were left unrealised because of a lack o material and economic support.

Constructivism not only included architectural projects, but also included painting, plastic arts, for instance by Naum Gabo, photography, film and theatre. Aleksandr Rodtschenko, who was an important organiser of the Russian art scene in 1920's, experimented with space, and he started something similar to constructive and montage graphics and photography. Later, photomontages were a successful method, for example in John Heartfield's and Hannah Höch's political photos. In additional to functionalism, constructivism became one o the main artistic programs of the 1920's Russia, in which art was seen as helping to form the everyday life of the proletariat. Further, in painting, the principle was that the world is given to us through vision and through colour and Kazimir Malevitsch was a leading figure in the new colour of theory

beginning with his 'suprematism'. In theatre, inspired by the study on time and motion related to the manufacturing efficiency of the American industrial engineer Taylor, Meyerhold developed the theory of 'biomechanics' which applied the mechanics of movements to the stage *mis-en-scène*. Constructivist theatre had a 'deconstructing' attitude toward the organisation of the dramatic performance, and instead of viewing a play as an entity, the performance was considered as a product composed of many different elements. The 'director-engineer' had to arrange it according to his or her understanding of the staged event. Meyerhold often shifted scenes and acts, changing their order, breaking them into shorter episodes and increasing the tempo. Similarly, in film, for instance, Vertov's ideas were based on the constructivist as well as futurist principles, and he also explored abstract patterns of movement and visual beauty in the production process[139].

Benjamin added the idea of constuctivism to the idea of time, especially historical time, more so than to the idea of space, as in Russian art. This 'testament' of Benjamin's thought also outlines the way I have approached the Theses in this work. The basis of the constructivist method is the idea of the dialectics as 'standing still', which, if the moment is reached, unfolds the elements of historical events. Benjamin's history is constructed through collecting information, quotations and testimonies, and he edits them together as a construction reminiscent of avant-garde piece of art. Yet, through this view, 'history' always remains an open stage ready for any interpreter to step in and start acting in the game.

An additional feature is its ability to include the aspects of the present surroundings. "Die erste Etappe dieses Weges wird sein, das Prinzip der Montage in die Geschichte zu übernehmen. Also die großen Konstruktionen aus kleinsten, scharf und schneidend konfektionierten Baugliedern zu errichten. Ja in der Analyse des kleinen Einzelmoments den Kristall des Totalgeschehens zu entdecken." (PW: 575) The new documentation and approach of history is to be considered an attempt at mediating the immediate present events to the present and future as a construction that allow their simultaneous presentation. The time span which disappears between the *Jetztzeit* and the moment of Then interrupts the supposed course of time as a frozen moment, thus preventing it from moving forward. Reading Benjamin from a contemporary perspective, this view on time and history could be seen as being present in contemporaneous media, news, magazines and radio, in which the individual immediately confronts the flow of events. Yet, the constructive method not only points to the reception of the immediate present, it includes the moment of actualisation in subjective thinking, which changes the idea from the purely passive spectator to the active participant in time. The individual is not seen as being a product of modern media-technology, but as its producer and also theoriser, who has the ability to critically disrupt the events by stepping 'outside of the homogeneous temporal flow'.

Benjamin expanded the idea of dialectics towards describing the movement of *thinking*, which, analogously to historical dialectics, can be brought to a standstill: "Zum Denken gehört nicht nur die Bewegung der Gedanken, son-

dern ebenso ihre Stillstellung." (1940: XVII) The structures of temporal consciousness and the course of thinking are shown as comparable. This creates a situation in which the moment of critique is the disruption in both aspects. Searching for the rupture is bound with the necessity of reaching the moment that passes by (*Kairos*). Tiedemann considers this interruption in the course of events to be typical of Benjaminian philosophising, and to his thinking in the form of thought images (*Denkbilder*). In the disruption, Benjamin seeks a way to set history as confronting every present conscious moment in its immediate appearance.

The process of actualisation (*Aktualität*) refers to the concept of history that cannot be seen as a closed entity but as a discontinuous series of events. Benjamin claims that historical events produce other events, but mainly through their actualisation in the Now-time. For instance, Chryssoula Kambas argues that the Benjaminian conception of actualisation is more than a temporal location in the *Jetztzeit*. The actuality defines temporal space, simultaneously making it 'subordinate' for revolutionary praxis, as the historical actuality did present itself as parallel to political actuality in the events of 1939-1940. If actuality means constructing historical events, as Kambas claims, then the Benjaminian concept of actualisation has a real historical background[140].

For my concern, Benjamin's concept of actuality might also be seen in a larger political context, as a principle of reading history and inspiring its reconceptualisation. The 'reading' could be seen as the actualisation of present events in a way that connects them to political theory and praxis. In the draft of the Theses, Benjamin notes that the revolutionary chance (*Chance*) is included in any moment. This chance is defined as a new solution:"einer ganz neuen Lösung im Angesicht einer ganz neuen Aufgabe." (GS I.3: 1231) The moment is specifically extended towards the sphere of the past, which was previously understood as 'already closed'. Here, we once again encounter the idea of dialectics, and Benjamin sees the opening of the past moment as becoming identical with political action.

CAIROLOGY AS THE TIME OF POLITICS

We should not ask what presence "is" rather, we should conceive presence as presence to someone, including to presence itself. This birth is not the constitution of an identity, but an endless departure of an identity from, and from within, its other, or others.
(Jean-Luc Nancy 1993: 9)

One of the messages provided in the *Theses* is both the need to search for a new place in which to think about the historical and political concepts of time, and to turn the approach towards a political view to the present. In the first Thesis, Benjamin presented 'reality' as a two way mirror; the illusion of a one-sided reality was turned around through the metaphor of a dwarf sitting under the table and leading the game. During the reading of the *Theses,* the invisible dwarf causes contingency and potential disruptions in the interpretation. Nevertheless, the theological aspects, merging with Jewish or Christian, Messianic or Marxist issues, which at first glance do not seem to be compatible with each other, are an important element in construction of new aspects in approaching the temporality of history. In this sense, the theology-dwarf does not necessarily prohibit the intellectual academic reflection, but can also be accompanied by the unknown elements that enrich it.

The *political aspect* in reading the *Theses* was emphasised in terms, of the way in which the aspect of temporality is connected with the political present and discontinuous history. Here, the *time of politics* means a combination of history, action, and experience 'in the right mass'. According to Giorgio Agamben, the temporal 'order' that emerges in reading Benjamin's speculation on history can be referred to as a "qualitative alteration of time, a *cairology*"[141]. As discussed here, this could be one suggestion for the alternative temporal, cairologic structure of politics, which comes forth in corresponding with the

chronological history. Especially here, the role of a political actor in historical events is seen as especially fluid and changeable, since, for instance, pace Agnes Heller, Kairos is the guiding *daimonion* of a free political actor[142]. This separates the Kairos-actor from the deterministic conception of action, which, for Benjamin, is included in the idea of progress. As Heller writes, the actor is in a situation that resembles the Heraklite saying about the impossibility of stepping into the same flow twice. The flow of time has already changed in the next moment.

In thinking about the messianic *Stillstellung*, Benjamin refers to Focillon's definition of the 'classic style'. Following Focillon, he characterised the *Stillstellung* as reminiscent of sudden good luck, like *l'axun* in Greek; this actualises the moment of Kairos in the standstill of temporal movements. The miraculous side of the moment in question is implanted in the 'hesitating immobility'[143]. In this fragment Benjamin also compares the ideas of messianic time and Marx's classless society. He concludes this comparison with the short notation, that the classless society is not conceived of as the goal of historical progress, but is rather the interruption of that history. This thought is connected to Scholem's interpretation in that the interference of the Messiah causes an historical rupture, from which it is impossible to conceptualise history in an earlier way. It is also important to note that Benjamin does not emphasise any final goal of history, not even as a theological 'goal', but instead, the temporal disruption is approached cairologically. The moment of Kairos, caused and achieved by singular political actions, contains the chance to gain and actualise the new perspective of history through action.

Über den Begriff der Geschichte visualises a temporal and textual confrontation between linear and discontinuous concepts of time and history, and Benjamin's critique focuses on scattering the universality of the homogeneous understanding of time. What Benjamin refers to as a destructive moment in history, is actually the deconstruction *(Abbau)* of the universal history, which discloses *(Ausschaltung)* the epic element and leads to the alienation from the history of the 'winners'. History should be 'brushed against its grain' and the differences between cultural, social and natural scientific histories should be discussed and arranged in a reflective relationship. This is the task of Benjamin's materialist writing of history, which revises the previous Marxist conception.

In more metaphoric terms, Benjamin characterises the linear temporality of history as a mythos, from which one should awaken. Consequently, this confrontation would shift towards a political interpretation of both the past and the present. It stresses the potentiality of the temporal standstill, and also the possibility of the political *Geistesgegenwart*. As I interpret this turn, the replacement of historical with political categories of thinking would be made by emphasising the *qualitative temporal differences*. These differences are materialised in texts, images or cultural artefacts, which create our experiences of the extended present. The interpretation of time is constructed through a subjective reflection, which happens via the aforementioned material 'of time'. As I have described the understanding of the temporal course as cairologic, this

new understanding of the relation between past and present time, which is as yet a rather unresearched issue, is also connected to the history by producing a new concept of history.

Here the temporal distinctions are made by following Benjamin's concepts. This departs from the idea that he expresses his interpretation of change, critique and transformation of phenomena in and through the concepts. This is also the moment in which the re-interpretation of the phenomena is made possible, as Benjamin used the concepts as including the subject of critique and transformation. Since most of the concepts introduced here are neologisms, they offer, if combined through a writing process, a unique image of a Benjaminian understanding of history. If we were to approach the matter of historiography in the Koselleckian terms of *Aufschreibung, Fortschreibung and Umschreibung*[144], I consider Benjamin's idea of collecting material, such as images, texts, or quotes, as pointing the origins of experience and as offering the moment of the historical revision (*Umschreibung*). This includes both, the aspect of conserving the moments of historical experiences and the possible surprise within them. However, this material should be used as an immediate confrontation in the reading and writing of history. It inevitably also includes the problem of the perspectivist interpretation of the material, as it is outlined in Nietzschean-Benjaminian historical attitude.

For Jean-Luc Nancy (1993), the presence manifests itself as a crossing point of old and new identities, as well as a meeting point of the self and others. Although I have not raised the issue of others and otherness in connection with time, history and identities here, it would be interesting to discuss the issue, for instance, in the context of raising the conception of 'my time', against the 'time of the others'. This would include the query of differences in cultures, races, sexes, or political systems. As does Nancy, Benjamin emphasises the difference included in the present. However, his interpretation does not search for the 'limits' of the present experience. Instead, through his critique, Benjamin creates the concept of present on the one hand and on the other hand, the idea of the present identity renewed through the existential idea of the Now-Being.

As history is not only a theoretical construction, it is also a political one. In Benjamin's concept of the political, politics which are subsumed under institutions and ideological systems, are comparable to 'historicism'. The 'real' political experience creates a new perspective on the past and the present, since it primarily makes the institutions and their continuity questionable. Bolz argues that in order to capture the Benjaminian experience of history, the subject should 'lose itself' for the moment – in order to get closer to the truth mediated in this moment. Here, the possibilities of constructing an idea of a historical subject should be seen from the beginning as relative and not as pre-determined[145].

The political experience, emerging from the *Copernican change* of turning from an historical to a political perception of time, is considered to be free from the illusion of the recurrence of the 'ever same' (cf. PW: 591). The temporal disruptions, as they combine temporal and political aspects, turn the per-

spective towards the present time, which is characterised primarily as the political time for action. But what is the role of a subjectivity in this turn? This question derives from the one source of Benjamin's *Copernican change*, which is Kant's turn towards individual consciousness. However, I do not agree with John McCole's interpretation of Benjamin as making 'the same' claim as Kant makes in his theory of knowledge, namely, to turn towards the subject[146]. Obviously, Benjamin did emphasise the role of the individual in the experience of history, yet his idea of the subject was not unified. Although he emphasises a strong subjectivity in constructing an opposition to the determinism of historical universalism, the purality is embedded in the way, in which the subject as connected to present time in each of its various connotations. The Being-in-Now *(Jetztsein)* is constructed between the temporal crossing points and with reflexivity, and it is also dependant on its structure of experiences which had, according to Benjamin, scattered in modernity.

The importance of Benjamin's claim that McCole failed to recognise, was the characterisation of *political time* in Benjamin's *Copernican change*. As such, it is not correct to claim that Benjamin would do simply 'the same' as Kant, as Benjamin here explicitly opposes the idea of presupposed temporal continuity. The dialectics of temporal experience and the idea of the subject in the present time are conceptualised explicitly in terms of this confrontation. In this moment, the subjectivity and identity can be seen as being in a process of creation, including their potential scattering. The politics of the moment is embedded both in the idea of the scattering and reversal of the previous interpretations. The action, which leads to the further formation of the identity, is characterised as an awakened consciousness (*Erwachtes Bewußtsein*, PW: 490-491).

Benjamin's concepts of history and temporality resemble an architectural construction. If we consider this idea further, we see how constructivist architectural composition leaves the structure open, and the limits between outer and inner spaces are relativized. In the idea of historiography, it might mean the relativization of the limits between history, its material and interpretation, as in Benjamin's montage of 19th Century history. Symbolically, the idea of constructivism might be compared to the claim that the limit between subject and object is made transparent in Benjaminian ideas of history and politics. However, this is more complex because the idea of transparency might refer both to the concept of history and to the way in which the past experiences are immediately brought into the present time. This causes the history to be in a constant process of deconstruction and reconstruction, which happens through every lived present and not through historical autonomy.

II
THE WORK OF ART
IN THE TIME OF CHANGES

1. INTRODUCTION

There are many reasons to link Benjamin's *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* with *Über den Begriff der Geschichte*. The first combining issue is the emphasis on temporality, understood as the 'diagnosis' of Benjamin's contemporary situation. The issue of temporality, which in the Theses is historically and politically thematized, concerns here the aesthetic situation. The way in which Benjamin attempts to find an interpretation of the destiny of art since the beginning of this century can be read for instance in his 24.11.1934 written but never sent letter: "Vielmehr habe ich die geschichtlichen Studien – ... – unterbrochen und begonnen, der anderen Seite der Waage mich zuzuwenden. Denn jede geschichtliche Erkenntnis läßt sich im Bilde einer Waage vergegenwärtigen, die einsteht, und deren eine Schale mit Gewesnen, deren andere mit der Erkenntnis der Gegenwart belastet ist. (...) Diese sind es, die ich mir in den letzten zwei Monaten durch Überlegungen über die Lebensbedingungen der Kunst in der Gegenwart verschafft habe." (GS VI: 814, cf. GS VII.2: 665)

This letter to Brecht outlines the disruption in the more historical studies, which means a concrete shift from the history of 19th Century Paris towards central Europe in the 1930's. Benjamin emphasises the importance of catching up with the contemporary in his theoretical and aesthetic reflections in letters also to Scholem or Horkheimer (Br. 690, 695). These letters inscribe similar intentions to those Benjamin outlines as his historical method in the *Theses*, namely, the confrontation between historical and contemporary phenomena in order to raise the level of knowledge *(Erkenntnis)* of the actual historical situation.

In a political sense, both of the texts are grounded in Benjamin's own confrontation with materialist theory. The *Theses* are constructed in order to revise the earlier materialist conception of history, as the main contradiction with the materialist historical conception is its temporal idea. However, Benjamin gene-

rally considers the Marxist doctrine to be the most effective in competing with the industrial or capitalist interpretations of the course of history, as long as the deterministic idea of progress would have been eliminated. The *Kunstwerk* intends to prove the hypothesis that the "materialist theory of art", which according to Benjamin lacks in his contemporary situation, exists after all[1].

The third connecting point between the texts of 1936 and 1940 is outlined in my methodical approach, as I understand the *concepts* as both a target and medium of Benjamin's critique. The *Kunstwerk* deals with the conceptual issue by discussing the transformation period of the art during 'modernity'. In my reading, I primarily raise the question of the *concept of art* through examining its connection to the questions of time and space. However, art and artwork are not the only subjects of discussion here, moreover, the essay focuses on the perception of the work of art and its emerging potentials in the changing political and aesthetic conditions.

In the era during which the conditions of artistic production had changed and the earlier canonised theory of interpreting or characterising the importance of art had become problematic, the redefinition of the concept of art became important. Most of the new artistic movements between the World Wars turned explicitly, as in futurist or surrealist manifestos, against the earlier art historical ideas of the conditions, values and judgements of art[2]. Modern art not only created a rupture in the aesthetic work and in its form, perhaps more importantly, it also manifested a change in aesthetic perception, which had been detectable since the Impressionists and Cezanne. The transformation of the perception developed in Cubism, Expressionism and Futurism, and was more freely expressed in Dadaism and Surrealism, as the formal classicism completely crumbled[3].

In the interwar art scene, aesthetic and political action implied a radicality and anarchism that followed for instance Bakunin's ideas to break with the moral or aesthetic preoccupation, rather than rational political action in terms of party politics. The political activities before and directly after the World War I ranged from fascism to revolution, and the primary intention was to shock and destroy the bourgeois aesthetic ideal. As the Nazis began to gain power in 1930's Germany, many of these movements had already run their course in the form, in which they had emerged, and the artists spread around Europe and America. Here, Benjamin sketched a rupture that included changed possibilities for artistic as well as political action.

In reading *Benjamin's Theses on the Concept of History*, I interpreted the temporality of the concepts of time, history and politics in connection, for instance, to origins, truth and knowledge. In the following reading of the *Kunstwerk,* I shall draw from this theoretical background, especially in outlining the importance of finding this temporal confrontation between the present and past moments. The confrontation, which was characterised above in terms of the Dialectical image and *Jetztzeit,* now becomes interpreted and illustrated through the concept of art. Generally, Benjamin asks how the aesthetic works are recognised, criticised, produced and considered as being the part of the social world in the era he begins to call the era of the technical reproducibility

of art. Broadly understood, this era characterises the way in which aesthetic modernity also combines the wider phenomena of the shattering of the experience, both in the politico-historical sense (1940: VIII) and aesthetic or philosophical sense (e.g. 1918, 1929, 1933c, 1939c).

All in all, the *Kunstwerk* outlines a similar methodological starting point as the 17th Thesis of History[4]. Since the end of the 1920's Benjamin had been characterising the importance of crystallising the experience of time, which was radically approached from the point of the present. Consequently, the continuity of the linearly conceived time or history was distracted by this new experience of time[5]. Benjamin saw his specific dialectics, in terms of *Dialectics in Standstill*, as a starting point for thinking about and conceptualising the present. Instead of approaching history from the perspective of movement, the new documentation and approach of history could be seen as characterised as the standstill of movement, as reaching the state of mediation of the *immediate present happening*. In the *Kunstwerk*, mediation occurs via a reflection on the work of art, and by opening its content through aesthetic critique.

The writing history of the *Kunstwerk* is closely connected to Benjamin's *Passagen*-project, which he began working on around 1927. Benjamin considered many of these shorter essays and books, written since the end of the 1920's, such as *Einbahnstraße* (1928) and *Der Sürrealismus* (1929), as preliminary works for the *Passagen*. During the time that he was writing the *Kunstwerk,* he also dealt with the problems of *Sprachsoziologie* (1935), wrote an introduction type article on *Bachofen* for a French publication (1935), sketched the materialist theory of an author in *Der Autor als Produzent* (1934), and outlined a comparison between painting and photography as well as a theory on fascist aesthetics in *Pariser Brief* I & II (1936). Additionally, Benjamin finished a short study on Russian author Nikolai Lesskow in *Der Erzähler* (1936), and Horkheimer offered him the possibility to write a study on Eduard Fuchs, which was published in 1937 in ZfS.

These works show a range of aesthetic, historical and political issues, more or less strongly bound together by the idea of historical materialism. The work on *Fuchs* further develops some of the thoughts expressed in the *Kunstwerk,* especially concerning the historical interpretation of the work of art. Benjamin remarked in his letters that although these smaller studies were preliminary material for his major project, they also constantly forced him to put the *Passagen* aside, since he practically only had time to rearrange the material for the book (cf. Br. 671-691). This unfortunate lack of time, which left the long term project open as mass of material on the table of history, was reminiscent of the ruins and fragments of his works, which allowed anyone to step in and reorder the material. However, this also seemed to be legitimated through Benjamin's own idea of the openness of history.

During the above mentioned studies, Benjamin had entered the nomadic phase of his life, after being forced to exile in 1933, and before moving to Paris in 1935. The issue that seemed to affect Benjamin's work the most was the absence of his carefully compiled library, which he was only able to partially view after he left Berlin. Benjamin travelled around Europe, and he was invited

to Bertolt Brecht's home in Denmark in the summers of 1934 and 1938. He also sporadically lived in San Remo, *Villa Verde*, at the home of his ex-wife Dora[6]. Parallel to Scholem, Benjamin had intensive correspondence, for instance, with the members of *Frankfurt Institute für Sozialforschung*, which had since emigrated to America. His wish was to become economically endowed by the institute, through which he hoped to improve his own financial situation. However, despite Adorno's intellectual support, this did not seem to be too optimistic a perspective, as Adorno and Horkheimer sharply criticised the first draft of the *Exposé* for *Das Passagen-Werk* and were also sceptical of Benjamin's studies on Baudelaire. This caused economic and intellectual pressure on Benjamin to also produce 'diplomatic' works that would join him loosely to the doctrine of the Institute[7].

The *Kunstwerk* essay was published in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (ZfS), in 1936, translated into French by Pierre Klossowski[8]. As a result of editorial remarks of Horkheimer, some of the original terminology and chapters were changed in order to comply with the institution's doctrine and the 'French audience'[9]. Since Benjamin was not completely satisfied with this revised version of the essay, he continued to work on the German version, and considered publishing it through Brecht in *Das Wort*. As it turned out, especially when Benjamin's *Nachlässe* became available, there was no finished version of the *Kunstwerk*, since Benjamin continued working on it until 1939. The work mixed thematically with his *Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire*, and more implicitly, also with the *Thesen.*[10]

This specific essay was to become one of Benjamin's most well-known and most quoted texts, and it gained the official label of attaching Benjamin's work to the Frankfurt Institute[11]. Yet, its reception was full of contradictions already among its first readers, as the reception of this essay is similar to that of the Theses. Scholem consistently criticised Benjamin's Marxism during the 1930's, and in his view, Brecht's influence on Benjamin's thinking was "baleful and in some aspects disastrous". For Adorno, it seemed that Benjamin wrote the *Kunstwerk* essay in order to compete with Brecht with regard to radicalism. What Brecht himself thought about the essay was, that particularly Benjamin's concept of aura in Kunstwerk was mysticism coupled with an anti-mystical stance, and Brecht judged the concept of aura as being "pretty awful"[12].

***

I use the variety of four versions as the material for my reading, of which I mainly focus on three of them; those published as GS I.2. (1935 the first version) and GS VII.1. (1936a the second version). I refer fluently to the third version of the essay, originally published in GS I.2, and which became later translated for the *Illuminations* collection (1939c)[13]. My method of reading follows the text using an exegetic and philological approach, bound with the temporal and conceptual question, which I also practised in *Theses*. I shall claim, that Benjamin implicitly practised a 'conceptual research' on art, in which the work of art is the key figure in rethinking, interpreting and updating the art-discus-

sion. This conceptual issue also opens a critical discussion on the temporality of history in the specific aesthetic sense, which is a link to the political intentions of the essay[14]. Yet, in the beginning of this chapter I shall make background remarks on Benjamin's earlier thinking, which outlines features of his aesthetic work. This is put together as an attempt to move from the general idea of art history to its critique, as a turn towards a singular work-history: from *Kunstgeschichte* to *Kunstwerkgeschichte*. The difference is already detectable in the beginning of Benjamin's dissertation, as he compares the general concept of art to the singular work as the difference between *Poesie* and *Dichtung* (1918: 14).

After the background, I shall focus more specifically on the question of how the temporality appears in the concepts of *origins, authenticity* and *tradition*, and I shall also disclose the impact that Benjamin's essay has in the thinking of the temporality and history of the work of art. The topics of *rituality, cult* and *aura*, become central ideas in outlining Benjamin's idea of the connection between the avant-garde and politics, and provide a temporal interpretation of the role of the avant-garde. To illustrate these ideas, I turn towards cinematic and image material, firstly reflecting on it through examples of *aestheticization of politics* in the chosen Russian and German films. Secondly, I reflect on the changed temporal and spatial conditions of film and photography in artistic space of experiment *(Spielraum)*.

The rupture that Benjamin outlines in the *Kunstwerk* is only one example of a revolutionary or avant-garde moment which can emerge in any aesthetic era. To actualise this rupture in theory and praxis, it is important to acknowledge the contradicting forces of historical and current events. However, Benjamin's need to 'step out' of the self-repeating course of history is also explicit in the *Kunstwerk*, as his political engagement includes not only a critique of the bourgeois, but also of fascist aesthetics. The danger of identifying with the fascist values is illustrated in the essay through the terms of *cult* and false historical *continuity*. What makes the essay important material in terms of temporalized politics, is Benjamin's acknowledgement of the political and aesthetic transformations and their correspondence. The political meaning is embedded in the rupture that the reproducibility causes in a canon of art historical interpretation. As a result, new aesthetic canons were born out of this moment, which however, are impossible to interpret with the old terms. Generally, I would not restrict this notion solely to the historical context of the beginning of this century, as the technologically caused and produced ruptures in art do happen constantly, as does the search for the means to understand their development. These also include the impact for further development of aesthetics, as for instance, the abstract, non-figurative and geometrical art emerges from the ruptures in the earlier aesthetic practice and perception.

2. ON BENJAMIN'S POSITION IN AESTHETIC THEORY

Before turning to the *Kunstwerk* essay itself, I shall shortly discuss Benjamin's stance in the wider context of aesthetic theory and traditions that characterise German modernity. Benjamin's aesthetic thinking is a hybrid of issues from German baroque, early Romanticism and modern poetry. Hence, his aesthetic studies are more specifically outlined than his idea of history. Benjamin's interest in the early Romantic thinkers including his implicit critique on Enlightenment rationalism was originally expressed by the confrontation between Fichte and Schelling in his dissertation, *Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutschen Romantik* 1919. After writing the dissertation, he turned towards the work of Goethe and Hölderlin and in the mid-1920's he wrote the often disputed habilitation, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*.

If we interpret the meaning of aesthetics as the theory of beauty or more broadly as a philosophy of art, then Benjamin's work is on the borderline of aesthetic theory[15]. However, upon closer examination on the idea of the work of art as a turning point in philosophical speculation, and the question of how the art and its 'truth' are connected to the philosophical truth, Benjamin's position is not far from the major modern aesthetic theorists, such as Heidegger and Adorno[16]. With regard to the question of the philosophical and aesthetic concepts of *experience (Erfahrung)*, which remained implicit throughout his work, Benjamin's approach is also delineated by the philosophical confrontation with Kant and in some terms with Hegel's aesthetics[17]. Around 1917, in his search for the topic for his dissertation, Benjamin considered Kant's history of philosophy as a potential subject. After studying Kant more carefully, Benjamin rejected this thought, because, although he had always admired Kant's systematic thinking, he came to resist Kant's 'thoroughgoing ethical interest'. Kantian ethos leads, according to Benjamin, to ignoring the aspects of the historico-philosophical[18]. Following Nietzsche's critique of the Kantian aesthe-

tic judgement of taste as being neutral, passionless and disinterested, Benjamin saw this characterisation as especially descriptive of the Neokantian concept of experience.

Examining the relationship between Benjamin's aesthetics and Kant might, as Gasché remarks, be helpful in discussing and utilising their different points of approach[19]. In his third critique, Kant describes that the "pure judgement of taste" is neither interested in nor intrigued by the existence of the object[20]. Free beauty is pleasurable, because its perception assures the subject of his or her cognitive ability, and it is achieved only when the judgement of taste retains sensuous charm and moral connotations. For Benjamin, especially in his later phase of thinking, this is not valid; art should be understood as free from moral connotations, and especially from the universal idea of morality[21]. Benjamin's further detachment from Kant can be found by the way in which he tries to detach the work of art from the authority of the artistic object, or from the authority of universal interpretation. According to Gasché, Kant's detachment of the beautiful and the sublime of the object seems to have been Benjamin's model for the transformed perception of art, a perception free from the authority of the object[22]. As Kant transfers the attributes of beauty and 'sublimity' to the subject, as the experience of pleasure or displeasure, he occupies a position in aesthetic history that is still valued in this century. However, Benjamin's approach to the aesthetic subject has transformed from the rational position towards a modern idea, which conceives of subjectivity in a more diffuse and multiplied fashion. This approach also remained in the background of Benjamin's claim of the shift from the subjective ability of experience towards the more scattered ability of *Erlebnis* (e.g. 1933c, 1939a).

Although the issue of subjectivity does not become explicit in Benjamin's work, I claim that he partly holds on to a unified idea of a subject in the background of his later discussion on the changes of experience and perception. This makes subjectivity two-sided, and implies that it is reflexively related to the matter discussed. Benjamin considers modern life as becoming increasingly contingent in the spheres of the social or aesthetic, which scatters the subjectivity. In some terms, for example in the *Erzähler* (1936b), Benjamin seems to be slightly nostalgic of the idea of the common experience as he emphasises the continuity of the tradition in literary forms. However, in the *Kunstwerk,* he simultaneously celebrates the rupture of the tradition, which affects to the idea of aesthetic subjectivity and aesthetic perception. Almost reminiscently of his own description on the modern poet and the 'crowd' in *Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire*, Benjamin does not directly discuss the subject but does expect it to be 'present' as an individual, an experiencing and acknowledging figure webbed in the structures of his texts. Concerning aesthetic judgement I would argue that Benjamin does view aesthetic judgement (if it can be called by this term) as subjective, but in a reflective way. The detachment from Kant is again apparent, especially since the dichotomy between subject and object is altered and partly vanished in Benjamin.

The importance of the concept of experience derives form the sources that combine Benjamin's earlier philosophical studies with his interest in modern

poetry, especially in Baudelaire. Benjamin's claim of experiential *shift* in modernity is discussed primarily in his essays of the mid 1930's, as he characterises the modern experience, which he still saw as possible to recast in the 1918, as being in a process of degeneration. The idea was further developed, for instance, in connection with his concept of aura[23]. In Benjamin's distinction between *Erfahrung* and *Erlebnis* (1939a: 609-611), the experience as *Erfahrung* was described as unified knowledge, and the *Erlebnis*, its counterpart, as appearing and vanishing in shock.

Although I mainly restrict the discussion on Benjamin's concept of history to the context of the Theses, the topic is naturally present in his other works. For instance, as a review of *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen* (Bd. I, Berlin 1931), Benjamin wrote two separate versions called *Strenge Kunstwissenschaft*[24]. In my viewpoint, the importance of the review is Benjamin's discussion on the relation between Wölfflin and Riegl in how they present the history of art[25]. In his review, Benjamin considers that Wölfflin intends to detach himself from the universal historical idea of art, but is not completely successfull in doing so: "Wölfflin hat zwar den Dualismus zwischen einer flachen, universalhistorischen 'Geschichte der Kunst aller Völker und Zeiten' und einer akademischen Ästhetik aufgezeigt, ihn aber doch nicht gänzlich überwunden." (1933d: 370)

The more successful combination between universal history and academic aesthetic is made by Alois Riegl, causing Benjamin to argue that he represents a new type of 'science of art' *(Kunstwissenschaft)*. The change is especially obtained in Riegl's short essay, *Kunstgeschichte und Universalgeschichte* (1898), in which the traditional idea of universal history is altered, putting emphasis on the importance of the single works of art *(Ausdeutung des Einzelwerks)*. The emphasis on the singular moment, in which the contingent and interruptive character of the work of art becomes visible, is of parallel importance; as such, it is distinguished from the universal historical frame (1933d: 372). The emphasis on the single work of art also distinguishes contextual art history from universal history, for instance in discussing the *Höhepunkten* or *Verfallsperioden* of art. This thought is repeated in Benjamin's Theses with the dictum that no periods of degeneration exist in history *(es gibt keine Verfallszeiten* 1940: VII). According to Benjamin, Wölfflin's legacy is, that he was the first to interpret the baroque period as something positive, and not as a testimony of a decay *(Zeugnis des Verfalls)* as Burkhardt did (1933d: 373).

In the interpretations on modern French poets like Baudelaire and Flaubert, Benjamin's interests merge both with more social issues, and with materialist aesthetics. In the Addendum to *Paris the second empire in Baudelaire,* Benjamin dates the development to *art for art's sake (l'art pour l'art)* as to happen around 1852 (1938: 514, cf. 1929: 301-302). At the beginning of the second empire, the bourgeoisie, especially writers and artists, withdrew from political and social engagements. In the *Kunstwerk,* Benjamin interprets the phenomenon as opposed to the modern reproduction techniques, especially the photograph. However, the turn to *l'art pour l'art* also signifies a broader turn, as art began to withdrew itself from its political role, and as such, it marks a turning point in aesthetic thinking itself. Here, Benjamin turns explicitly against the bourgeois

idea of 'pure art' in the similar manner to when he criticised the 'bourgeois' idea of language in his early essay on language (1916: 144).

The moral conviction and aesthetic authority of the 'bourgeois' conception of art was broken roughly in the beginning of this century. Among the issues underlining the rupture were, for instance, emphasis on themes like 'aestheticization of the everyday' in avant-garde art and the increasing commodification of the life-world. Benjamin emphasised the idea of the aestheticization of everyday life especially in *Der Sürrealismus* (1929) in which he used the concept of *profane Erleuchtung* (profane illumination) to characterise the surrealist intention in radicalising the everyday experience in art. Some of the reasons why the new arts of experience were important for Benjamin were, for instance, the critique of the religious and metaphysical idea of experience, the critique of the bourgeois form of art, and the importance he gave to the singularities of the present.

From the beginning, Benjamin bound the ideas of beauty and mystery, also in his idea of art critique. However, the mystical did not apply to the *work* of art, but rather to language and the critique surrounding the works. Language also became an important element in the attempt to find the possibility of combining words and images throughout Benjamin's thinking. Around the mid-1920's this 'mystification of aesthetics' did, however, become merged with the materialist idea. The new idea was to distinguish art from its idealistic-mystical connotation, and to deny a contemplative moment of art; the purpose was to strive towards a non-contemplative aesthetic perception, which Benjamin considered as political.

2.1. The Early Idea of the Work of Art

To exemplify the specificity Benjamin gave to the work of art in his studies on early romanticism, I examine his 1919 dissertation as well as his early letters. In the letter that Benjamin wrote to Scholem, dated 30.3.18 and coinciding with the completion of his dissertation, he expressed the thought of following the romantic idea of art critique. "Seit der Romantik erst gelangt die An-schauung zur Herrschaft daß ein Kunst*werk* an und für sich, ohne seine Beziehung auf Theorie der Moral in der Betrachtung erfaßt und ihm durch den Betrachtenden Genüge geschehen könne. Die relative Autonomie des Kunst*werkes* gegenüber der Kunst oder vielmehr seine lediglich tranzendentale Abhängigkeit von der Kunst ist die Bedingung der romantischen Kunstkritik geworden." (Br. 179-180)

The quote shows Benjamin's view that since the Romantics, the work of art was understood as being relatively autonomous of the general idea of art, and without a direct relation to the theory of morality. This distinction, which originates especially in Schlegel's philosophy, appeared again in the *Kunstwerk* as the distinction between the single work of art and art as a general concept. However, the moral singularity was more powerfully expressed in *Der Surrealismus*, as Benjamin connected political freedom to liberation of the moral theo-

ry, which was also connected to his claim of the political meaning of art[26]. This describes the way in which Benjamin provokes the meaning of the avant-garde to be detached from the 'burden' of moral or aesthetic theory.

Benjamin sees the work of art as carrying the social and historical conditions of its own time within itself, in a crystallised form. These conditions are to be reflected from the contemporary to the future reception of art, and as much as possible, are to be completed in art critique. The aspect of art critique, besides its temporal idea of connecting the work to the revaluation with future generations, also raises the question of knowledge that "...is settled in the work of art as being part of its incompleteness" (Br. 323). Since the critique means the act of completing the work, the knowledge or 'truth' of the work of art can only be reached through its completion.

In his 9.12.1923 letter to Florens Christian Rang, Benjamin claims that the essence of the work of art lacks history in a chronological sense. "Es (das Kunstwerk, kl) ist seinem Wesentlichen nach geschichtslos. Der Versuch das Kunstwerk in das geschichtliche Leben hineinzustellen eröffnet nicht Perspektiven, die in sein Innerstes führen, wie etwa der gleiche Versuch bei Völkern auf die Perspektive von Generationen und andere wesentliche Schichten führt."(Br. 322) The moment of moral autonomy is embedded in the way in which the work exists without being affected by interpretations of it. This claim does not imply indifference towards art history, but it does point out the distinction between *works,* their *interpretation* histories and the *universal* art history. Especially if the idea is combined with the above quote from Scholem's letter (Br. 179-180), Benjamin makes here the passage from *Kunstgeschichte* towards *Kunstwerkgeschichte,* which is a 'constellation' of single works, existing in temporal sense autonomously and as a link between various periods of time.

The same letter to Rang also contains the idea that works of art are related to the art historical framework in a manner similar to the relation of the philosophical systems to history. 'History' offers a canon of dogmas or philosophers. However, it is as important to note how the single works of art – or systems of philosophy – can be detached from the canon in the case of their actual interpretations as how these are attached to the canon of interpretations. Thoughts similar to the ones in this letter are also included in Benjamin's *Ideenlehre,* which was mainly developed in the *Vorrede* of his *Trauerspiel* book (GS I.3: 888). If the works of art are to be 'given a history', it should be detached from the *interpretations* of the works, which will canonise themselves to layers of historical interpretations. In this, the relation between single works remains intensive as well as timeless *(Zeitlos),* as a potential for every new or renewed interpretation emerges in the coming present times[27].

Benjamin's aesthetic research concludes with his attempt to establish a 'new' genre of the *Kunstkritik* in Germany[28]. The problem of critique of art derives from the question posed by Goethe, whose reclaim is that it is not possible to criticise the work of art (1919: 110-119). The intention in Benjamin's Goethe essay[29] is to show the importance of distinguishing between the *Wahrheitsgehalt* and *Sachgehalt* of the work of art, which also shows the possibility of the critique. The (here literary) *critique* should reach the truth value of the work, whe-

reas the *commentary* is the discussion on its substantial value (1922: 125). However, Benjamin denies the possibility of making timeless judgements about beauty. The art critique should mainly focus on reaching the truth value of the work by unfolding the illusion of the work as being impossible to uncover. The critique should lead in discovering its essential beauty.

"Nicht Schein, nicht Hülle für ein anderes ist die Schönheit. Sie selbst ist nicht Erscheinung, sondern durchaus Wesen, ein solches freilich, welches wesenhaft such selbst gleich nur unter der Verhüllung bleibt. [...] Also wird allem Schönen gegenüber die Idee der Erhüllung zu der der Unenthüllbarkeit. Sie ist die Idee der Kunstkritik." (1922: 195) The beauty is included in the secrecy *(Geheimnis)* of the work, but not in its presentation *(Erscheinung)* (1922: 196). Actually, this beauty includes the possibility of being recovered in a similar manner as the Benjaminian historico-philosophical and temporal moments include the possibility of salvation if recognised in the right moment. In these terms, according to my interpretation, as the 'truth' of history is possible to redeem through the rupture and critique caused by the acknowledgement of the historical subject, the 'truth' of art is also possible to reach by the aesthetic critique.

In the Rang-letter from 1923, Benjamin makes the somewhat ambiguous formulation of critique as the 'mortification' of the work of art. It combines Goethe's idea of the *unkritisierbarkeit* of the work of art with the question about the connection between critique and knowledge: "Kritik ist Mortifikation der Werke. Nicht Steigerung des Bewußtseins in ihnen (Romantisch!) sondern Ansiedlung des Wissens in ihnen." (Br. 323) One aspect of the art critique might uncover the knowledge that is settled in the artworks as part of their incompleteness. As the critique means the completion of the work, only through this task can the 'truth' of the work be reached. Benjamin's specific concept for this attempt is an 'immanent critique', which, as he notes in the dissertation, consists also of a paradox, which would be opened, yet, as I conceive, remain present in the reflection of the art:

> Dies ist die Struktur des Werkes, für das die Romantiker eine immanente Kritik verlangen.(...) Denn es ist nicht abzusehen, wie ein Werk an seinen eigenen Tendenzen kritisiert werden könnte, weil diese Tendenzen, soweit sie einwandfrei feststellbar, erfüllt, und soweit sie unerfüllt, nicht einwandfrei feststellbar sind. Diese letzte Möglichkeit muß im Extremen Falle die Gestalt annehmen, daß innere Tendenzen überhaupt fehlen und sonach die immanente Kritik unmöglich werde würde. Der romantische Begriff der Kunstkritik ermöglicht die Auflösung dieser beiden Paradoxien. Die immanente Tendenz des Werkes und demgemäß der Maßstab seiner immanenten Kritik ist die ihm zugrunde liegende und in seiner Form ausgeprägte Reflexion (1919: 77).

The critique of art means, in these terms, *not the judgement of the work but rather the completion, as well as a reflection of the work.* The paradox of the critique cannot be solved by any general rule of interpretation or critique, but should be considered separately in each case. In this sense, Benjamin leaves the character

of any historical interpretation open. Due to the incompleteness, the relationships between single works of art can always be re-interpreted. This allows for the revision of the art-historical canon, as the 'order' of history can also be approached cairologically instead of through chronological interpretation.

Especially after reading the *Theses*, the importance of these reflections on the temporal singularity of the work of art and its independence in a moral or historical/chronological sense, becomes evident. It also shows how Benjamin develops his thought on the confrontation between the singular and the universal throughout his work. As I discussed above, Benjamin perceives the pieces of art as being independent from chronological history, in order to show how they become recognisable through his specific idea of the art-critique. This approach is reminiscent of the search for the Now-time moment or the dialectical image in the Theses, as causing the disruption, or at least a re-interpretation, of the previous course of history. The manner in which Benjamin sees the object of art as an object of perception in the *Kunstwerk*, and the way in which he emphasises the importance of perceiving them without the burden of tradition, is an issue that supports the hypotheses that the work of art can also be relevant material in further in unfolding the 'seeds of present' of varying times. However, in this case, the impulse for the temporal insight is materialised in single artworks.

The work of art includes the critical moment of interpretation in both named aspects, in the work itself and its history. Benjamin argues in the Theses that the experience of *Jetztzeit* could be understood as parallel to the Leibizian monad, in which the core of the experience originates in these moments themselves[30]. However, he already included the idea of the Leibnizian monad as related to the discontinuity of history in his earlier thought: "Leibniz, dessen Gedanke der Monade ich für die Bestimmung der Ideen aufnehme und den Du (F.C.Rang/kl) mit der Gleichsetzung von Ideen und Zahlen beschwörst - denn für Leibniz ist die Diskontinuität der ganzen Zahlen ein für die Monadenlehre entscheidendes Phänomen gewesen." (Br. 323)

The idea of experience is included in the moment, in which the temporal confrontation becomes present in the consciousness. This confrontation opens the content of artworks for reflection and it becomes potential material for re-interpretations. In other words, it is possible to 'complete the infiniteness' of the past through subjective experience and via the art critique, keeping in mind, that this task of completion is also temporally defined.

2.2. The Concept of Experience

In *Über das Programm der kommenden Philosophie* (*Programm*, 1918) Benjamin takes the 'empirism' as his object of critique with regard to how the empirical idea of philosophy characterises the relation between knowledge and truth. Firstly, Benjamin criticises the relation between Kantian knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) and experience (*Erfahrung*), since according to Kant, the knowledge is characterised as a timeless stability (*Gewiss und bleibend*), and the experience is

understood as temporally passing *(vergänglich)*. Through criticising the timeless knowledge and the temporal experience, Benjamin creates the concept of experience that is characterised by *temporal singularity* (cf. 1918: 148) The goal here is to find a connection between knowledge and experience, which would reconcile the Kantian distinction between them[31].

As Benjamin claims, the way the concept of experience was adjusted by Neokantian philosophers, especially by Hermann Cohen, did not pay enough attention to the shift in historical context after the period of Enlightenment[32]. There was a necessity to characterise the new concept of experience in the era, which had radically changed since the time when experience was constructed based on the influence of Newtonian physics. Here, one side of the problem of the transforming the tradition as well as Benjamin's sensitivity to conceptual transformation becomes apparent[33]. For Benjamin, any argument for universality, in this case in the concept of experience, remains restricted through the world view of the temporally limited era. The concept of experience should be rethought separately from the Kantian context, in correspondence with the present era: "Diese Erfahrung jedoch war, wie es schon angedeutet ist, eine singuläre zeitlich beschränkte und über diese Form hinaus, die sie in gewisser Weise mit jeder Erfahrung teilt, was diese Erfahrung, die man auch im prägnanten Sinne *Weltanschauung* nennen könnte, die der Aufklärung." (1918: 158-159)

As Benjamin sees it, the ignorance of the temporal singularity prohibits the critical distance from the earlier idea of experience. In other words, it also prohibits the actualisation of the concept in the present conditions. For Benjamin, the way in which the Kantian *Erfahrung* includes the world view of the Enlightenment, and the concept includes the growing influence of physics and the natural sciences, essentially limits the possibilities of the concept to its 'minimum, to the zero point of its potential content' (1918: 159). Benjamin's critique is that when the concept was rethought in the beginning of the 20th century, it no longer reflected the actual historical, social and aesthetic context.

Benjamin's ambition in his theory of knowledge is to find a higher *(höhere)* concept of experience. The concept is based on the Kantian idea, although, at the same time, he attempts to overcome the limits of the empirical experience, and the dichotomy of subject and object, which signifies its emptiness *(Hohlheit)*. Benjamin also admits that it is impossible to overcome the problem of metaphysics, which is a problematic point for the interpretations, since his idea of metaphysics includes the religious connotation of the experience (1918: 160, 163). If this is combined with the later idea of the experience of the work of art in its social context, the concept of experience should reach the social and aesthetic aspects, and not be restricted to empirism and natural sciences. Especially with regard to the experience of art and aesthetics, this dilemma seems to be constantly actualised but not 'solved' in Benjamin's later philosophy.

The most radical claim in the *Programm* essay was that the empirical experience is closely related to the experience of the insane: *Der erkennende Mensch, das erkennende empirische Bewußtsein ist eine Art des wahnsinnigen Bewußtseins*

(1918: 162). Benjamin attacks the empiricist attempt to reduce the idea of scientific experience to the matter of objectivity, and he claims that the objective relation between empirical consciousness and the objective concept of experience which excludes the subject, is impossible to establish[34]. In these terms, the demand of the future theory of knowledge is to find a way to approach the subject/object dichotomy in a way that would not divide the spheres of knowledge or experience according to subjective or objective, but consider them as merging in the act of experience.

The new concept would also lead to the relativization of the idea of a sole subjective character of consciousness (*Die Subjektnatur des erkennenden Bewußtseins*, 1918: 161). The thought is especially reflected through the perception, which is a constitutive action of occupying a position in which the perceiving subject and object merge. This idea is also present in Benjamin's dissertation, as he emphasises that the work of art is autonomous, and not only a 'side product' (*Nebenprodukt)* of the subjectivity. According to Novalis, the reflection in the sphere of art is embedded in the creativity of the subject, and it does not follow pre-set laws, such as the synthetic function of the consciousness. This idea comes to negate the rational dogma and dogmatism concerning the art critique. "Wo das Kritische aufhört und das Dogmatische anfängt ist vielleicht nicht genau aufzuzeigen weil der Begriff des Dogmatischen lediglich den Übergang von Kritik zu Lehre von allgemeinern zu besondern Grundbegriffen kennzeichnen soll." (1918: 169, cf. 1919: 71)

It seems that Benjamin's critique especially of Neokantian concept of experience or post-Kantian idea of aesthetic judgement is based on the idea of the reflective critique. As discussed above, the early Romantic concept of art critique not only acknowledges subjective evaluation or critique of the work of art, but the critique should also open up the *immanent content* of the work (1919: 80). Benjamin's claim is, that the work of art is contingent in time and autonomous in itself. The reflective critique should acknowledge both of these components: "Weil aber jede einzelne Reflexion in diesem Medium nur eine Vereinzelte, eine zufällige sein kann, ist auch die Einheit des Werkes gegen über der der Kunst nur eine relative; das Werk bleibt mit einem Moment der Zufälligkeit behaftet." (1919: 73)

In Benjamin's view, it is the responsibility of the post-Kantian philosophy to reconsider which elements of Kant's thinking should be adapted, and which should be rejected. In the conclusion of the main text of the *Programm,* Benjamin requests, with regard to knowledge and experience, that the coming philosophy should create a doctrine of the knowledge, in which the new concept of experience corresponds with the knowledge *(Erkenntnis).* "Und damit läßt sich die Forderung an die kommende Philosophie endlich in die Worte fassen: Auf Grund des Kantischen Systems einen Erkenntnisbegriff zu schaffen dem der Begriff einer Erfahrung korrespondiert von der die Erkenntnis Lehre ist. (...) Erfahrung ist die einheitliche und kontinuierliche Mannigfaltigkeit der Erkenntnis." (1918: 168)

Benjamin's concept of experience follows the plurality of knowledge, which means that it becomes redefined in various connotations. Benjamin also emp-

hasises the linguistic nature of the *Erkenntnis,* in which the reflection on the linguistic essence of the knowledge also creates the experience. This is the task that Benjamin considers of as failing in Kant's theory. He also stresses the role of concepts, as they include the potentiality of the truth, as distinguished from the 'ideas themselves', to offer an escape from 'metaphysics'. Knowledge is approached being essentially related to the concept of experiences, and in language the knowledge and truth are the linguistic products of the subject and his or her critical activity[35].

3. THE CONCEPTUAL QUESTION

Benjamin begins the *Kunstwerk* essay with Marx, as he refers to Marx's analysis of the capitalist mode of production. It seems that there has been a major amount of commentaries that have seriously interpreted the essay within the context of the preface[36]. It is ironic that this particular chapter was left out of the first published version because it might have been read as a strong ideological statement. However, being aware of the background, as well as of the majority of the commentaries on Benjamin's Marxism, I shall reduce my interpretation to the claim that Benjamin raises in the Valéry-quotation in the beginning of the essay. This is the question of the *concept* of art in the era of its transformation. The period of transformation, called the reproducibility of the work of art, was, as will become clear in the course of the essay, mixed with the changed role of images and visual culture, both of which are connected to the changes of perception and interference of technique in the production of art. All of this directly affects art theory as well as the aesthetic discourse: "Man muß sich darauf gefaßt machen, daß so große Neuerungen die gesamte Technik der Kunst verändern, dadurch die Invention selbst beeinflußen und schließlich vielleicht dazu gelangen werden, den *Begriff der Kunst* selbst auf die zauberhafteste Art zu verändern." (Valéry, *Pieces sur l'art*. Paris p.103/104. Quoted after Benjamin 1939c: 472, italics kl[37])

Paul Valéry claims that the changes in modern science are in accordance with the changes in material, spatial and temporal influences of the technique of art. However, what changes during the course of reproduction is not only art itself, but also the *concept* of art, the way in which art is conceived and conceptualised in the 'technological era'. In addition to Valéry and Benjamin, for example, Bertolt Brecht pays attention to the thoroughgoing change of the concept of art in modernity. His scepticism concerning the issue surrounds the idea that the earlier concept of art will not have anything in common with an 'object', that art will become, when it becomes a commodity *(Ware)*. Pace

Brecht, this process changes the whole past of art so, that there no longer exists memory of the work of art in the sense in which it was earlier conceived[38].

Benjamin's observation is not this radical. Rather, he claims that the direction of art in the beginning of the century corresponds neither to the theses of proletarian art nor the theses of art in a classless society. What does correspond to Marxist analysis of the prognosis of art, is a development that becomes obvious in the concepts surrounding and describing art. For instance, this is the change in *creativity and genius, and the eternal value and secrecy* of art (*Schöpfertum und Genialität, Ewigkeitswert und Geheimnis*, 1936a: 350)[39]. In these terms, Benjamin's intention is to introduce a theory of art that would visualise the 'uncontrolled' and fascist usage of these concepts; this forms the core of Benjamin's politics of the arts *(Kunstpolitik)* in the essay. Although the politics of concepts attempts to detach them from fascist and canonised use, at the same time, it intends to open both new spaces of artistic understanding and the perspective for politicising art through the revolutionary demands. In further thinking about the ideas from 'creativity' to 'mystery', Benjamin links the inquiry to the critique of understanding art history, beginning with the Greek idea of the *eternal concept* of the work of art. This combines the temporal issue, with the Nietzschean critique that Benjamin sketches in the Theses, as critique of the monumentally understood history of the 'winners'. However, here monumentality and eternity are characterised as the mythos of a divine artist-creator, as the misuse of the Greek ideas was obvious in the fascist aesthetics.

It is by no means reasonable to read the conceptual critique merely as an abstraction or as a meaningless conceptual game. The radical nature of the neologisms that Benjamin constructs throughout his work is apparent here, and becomes forced towards the reinterpretation of art in the era, in which its conditions of production and reception are changing. As discussed in the introduction, Benjamin insists on bringing the discussion of art to the contemporaneous level. Yet, both his means and his conceptual critique are somewhat complex and obscure. He does not change the concepts directly, but temporalizes them by deconstructing their traditional or 'bourgeois' content-values. This destruction of eternal, ritualistic or cultic values in art should lead to a theory that diffuses the continuity of the art-historical and theoretical canon.

However, in the way it was used in the 19th century, the concept of art was already shattering. As much as Benjamin wished to detach art from its traditional bourgeois concept, he could not resist the temptation to also revise some of the Marxist ideas. Benjamin's critical approach led him to the paths in which he confronted the earlier materialist analysis of art, as he claimed to have traced a 'real' materialist theory of art (e.g. Br. 814). In this materialist theory, Benjamin took the capitalist mode of production as his object of criticism, although the tools of critique and the terminology he used, were his own[40]. The most consequential rupture he discovered in the concept of art was caused by the technical reproduction. This rupture added political potential to the arts in a way which before the beginning of the 20th century did not exist. The political potential could be seen for instance in Russian constructivist cinema or surrealist photomontages, both of which effectively combined politics, aesthetics

and reproduction technology. The politicisation also affirmed the aspects of action and transformation as a possibility embedded within the work of art itself. However, it is important to distinguish the notions about technique by the way in which the technology merges firstly into the idea and matter of art, and secondly, the way it affects the temporal ideas of the origins and the *authenticity* of art[41].

Benjamin marked a gap both in theory and praxis of art, which seemed to expand in the beginning of this century. He noted the problem of transfer period, but he did not explicitly provide a theoretical apparatus to bridge the gap. Benjamin's focus in the essay might have been a re-formulation of the criticised concepts of creativity, genius, eternal value and mystery, as he further detached these concepts from their traditional use, and re-interpreted them as marking the ritual or cult value of art, yet, he did not make any explicit revision of the concepts. Nevertheless, these issues bothered him also later on. In *Eduard Fuchs, der Sammler und Historian*, published in the following year in ZfS, Benjamin returned to some of these issues. In *Fuchs* the approach appeared to be more strictly dialectical Materialist than in the *Kunstwerk*[42], and the main topic which outlined the connection between *Fuchs* and *Kunstwerk* was that of the reproduction. In the 1937 essay, reproduction, considered to lead to 'new ways of perception', was described through the way in which it changed the perception of 'the masses', and Benjamin noted that the observation of mass art will result in the revision of the concept of the genius (*Die Betrachtung der Massenkunst führt zur Revision des Geniebegriffs*, 1937: 480, see also 484-485). The revision of the concept of the genius was seen as the result of the production of the 'art of the masses', in which the idea of genius 'transformed' towards more profane meaning.

Another recurrent issue in Benjamin's later work was the description of the 'eternal value' of art, discussed through his concept of *aura*. The concept of aura emphasised the conceptual transformation from a different perspective, especially in thinking about the connection between the questions of 'distance' and 'mass'. *In Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire*, Benjamin combined the ideas of aura, experience and mass anew. Here, the aura included the unique appearance of distance *(die einmalige Erscheinung der Ferne)*[43]. This definition characterised the idea that the cultic character of aura became *transparent* during the course of reproduction, and the aesthetic distance was characterised here as the main character of the cultic image (1939a: 647)[44]. However, this disappearance of the cultic element in art did not completely satisfy Benjamin, as he wanted to further develop the idea of aura, after it would have been 'cleansed' of its cultic content. "Vielleicht ist es notwendig, es mit dem Begriff einer von kultischen Fermenten gereinigten Aura zu versuchen? Vielleicht ist der Verfall der Aura nur ein Durchgangsstadium, in dem sie ihre kultischen Fermente ausscheidet um sich mit noch nicht erkennbaren anzunähern. Die auf das Spiel bezügliche Stelle der Reproduktionsarbeit heranziehen." (GS VII.2. 753) Benjamin found other – although still fragmentary – uses for the aura after *Kunstwerk* and *Baudelaire,* which were thought as a possibility for non-cultic auratic art. These other uses would have been developed from the ideas of artistic space of experiment *(Spielraum)*.

4. THE SHIFT IN TRADITION

The fact that the work of art has *always been possible to reproduce* (1936a: 351) implies that the process of reproduction is in itself nothing new. What is new since the middle of the 19th century, is the *technique* of reproduction, which introduces an interruptive *(intermettierend)* element to both the idea of reproduction as well as to the understanding of art. One of the specific characteristics of photography as a reproduction technique is, that the hand is replaced by the eye as the medium of reproduction. As the selective mediums of reproduction, the eye and vision change the relation between the reproduced works of art, and their perception in the new context. The analogies between the eye and speech, and also vision and sound, as they were combined, for instance, in the sound film in the early twenties, immediately evokes a new 'space of experience' in artistic creation and perception. Consequently, as the new technology produces a rupture in the understanding and discussion of works of art, it implies an interference in the history and perception of works of art.

Benjamin outlines technological reproduction as a specifically *historical* phenomenon. The historical nature of technology is emphasised in the essay on Eduard Fuchs, in which he claims that technology is not a purely scientific phenomenon: "Die Technik aber ist offenbar kein rein naturwissenshaftlicher Tatbestand. Sie ist zugleich ein geschichtliche. Als solcher zwingt sie, die positivistische, undialektische Trennung zu überprüfen, die man zwischen Natur- und Geisteswissenschaften zu etablieren suchte." (1937: 474) The reason why the reproduction can not only be approached scientifically, is that the gap between historical, which mainly refers to the perception since the renaissance discovery of the perspective, and modern ways of artistic perception, seems to expand. This begins a phase of constant transformation of art that is combined with new social and political elements.

Rather than observing technology as a natural scientific matter, and by keeping the interpretation and discussion of art in the context of art history,

Benjamin suggests that the reproduction is to be conceived of both as combining these disciplines and as a critique of their separation[45]. The dialectics between the natural and human sciences appears as a possibility to begin a dialogue between these disciplines. This discussion should establish a link towards cultural history *(Kulturgeschichte)* that would construct a counter meaning to the homogeneously understood concept of history (*Kulturgeschichte, Historie einer Wiedersinn*). The counter meaning would become visible and useful at the point in which the *Kulturgeschichte* would detach itself from the linearly conceived history and establish its own discipline. As in Benjamin's proposal, cultural history would form its basis in dialectical relation to other disciplines, appearing in this sense as open and reflective (1937: 477-478).

The larger focus of reproduction would be, in these terms, to establish a new idea of history, which would be based on the dialectics between the cultural and social, as well as to acknowledge the transformation of art within this history. Yet, this remains only in the background of the *Kunstwerk,* as its main issue is the changing of the temporal and spatial nature of the work of art itself through its reproduction. What makes the issue a fruitful target for my analysis is Benjamin's claim that reproduction affects the temporal and spatial conditions both of the work of art and the perception of the aesthetic subject. In retrospect, the change from manual to technical reproduction means that the aspects that interfere with the temporal and spatial conditions of the work of art differ from the 'human or natural' ones, which signify the preliminary confrontation between human and machine in arts. I consider Benjamin as being sensitive to the issue, again, because of his interest in early romantic thinkers, for instance Schlegel and Novalis, by whom the issue of the reconciliation between nature and ratio was widely discussed[46]. Nevertheless, the issue also has been widely discussed among artists since the beginning of this century, when the technology interfering in the artistic production includes questions, such as how 'reality' should be represented in the constant transformation of both reality and its representation.

In the re-conceptualisation of art, issues other than reproduction, such as the tradition or originality of art, also become disputable. As technical changes are comprehended as changing the temporal and spatial conditions of art, the ideas of the tradition, as well as the idea of the origins of the work of art, are presented as transformable. Through his discussion on tradition and originality, Benjamin temporalises the concepts by stressing the importance of the present tense, as he had already discovered the transformational nature of the concept of origins during his research on German *Trauerspiel* (cf. 1928: 28). In the *Theses,* Benjamin opposes the concept of tradition which is understood as chronologically ordered events, names or dates that are transferred into a 'universal' frame of interpretation. However, in order to avoid misinterpretation, it should be noted here that Benjamin does not deny the idea of tradition as composed of previously existing facts and events. Rather, he introduces the other perspective, which diffuses the earlier given meanings to the events placed in a historical continuum, and through this, he also politicises homogeneous historical time.

As an example of the transformation of tradition, and the shattering of the eternal value of art, Benjamin discusses the meanings given to the ancient Venus-statue, and he shows that its meaning varied in the ancient world and middle ages, which transformed the object of cult to the *Abgott* (1936a: 355). This example stresses the way how the temporal distance to the 'original' alters the earlier given meanings, and brings forth how the concept of tradition is dependent on the interpretation in any contemporary era. This is also described in other concepts, such as the transformation of art from 'cult value' to the 'exhibition value', which is an issue that stresses the commodification of the aesthetics. Yet, in this transformation, the questions of the amount of cult value included in the exhibition value, and the issue of a transformed cult remain as open.

In terms of my interpretation, the reproduction forms a specific example of the shift from earlier to modern way to construct history of art. The reproducibility is the element, which turns the chronological understanding of the history of work of art into a cairologic one, and also introduces the vivid and constantly variable element into art as a new form of cultural history. The artworks can not be considered as eternally constant any longer, nor can they be characterised as being finite in their existence; this means, that the work of art is temporalized. Samuel Weber accurately notes in his interpretation that Benjamin's conception of *Reproduzierbarkeit* not only refers to reproduction itself, but also to the possibility of being reproduced[47]. The reproducibility is conceived of as a 'mode of being' of the work of art and also including to the manner of creating art a new possibility. The aspect also adds the structural possibility of the future within the work of art, which might imply another change in the meaning of creating art[48].

5. TECHNICAL REPRODUCIBILITY

If the reproducibility is thought of as changing the temporal and spatial ways of perception, the most influential technique, after *Holzchnitt,* print or lithography is photography. The photograph is a snapshot that emphasises a single moment that the photographer experiences, the image and object are detached from the bondage to linearly understood temporality as the moment is arrested in an image as a snapshot *(Momentaufnahme)*. In the Benjaminian terms, photograph is a document of the single moment Then, underlined by a disruption in the temporal course. It also is a single mode of being, including in itself the historical documentary power, as the photograph is reproducible from the moment of its historical and temporal emergence. However, this position of the photo is still attached to the idea of the 'real', as it represents the momentary realness of the object and how it appears in time. The importance of the photograph is embedded in the ability to capture the moment in time, which now becomes possible to reproduce as an image in various times; this temporality leads to the reordering of the moments, for example, into a montage. The idea that, for instance, film is a montage consisting of a series of images *(Bildfolgen),* and that person who chooses the images (editor) can choose between many images, is also included in constructing the images of history as a montage[49].

An example of the closeness between the moment and the work of art can be seen in Marcel Duchamp's work, in which the snapshot is also a term of the 'ready-made'[50]. In the Benjaminian sense, this comes to describe the 'true' idea of the avant-garde. The photograph and 'ready-made' are conceived of as parallel descriptions of the simultaneity of their process of production. When the object is isolated from its original context, the decontextualisation provides other meanings for it. Other avant-gardian example, in this sense, is André Breton's and Alberto Giacometti's book and photo project, *L'amour fou* (1937). Breton and Giacometti collected objects from a flea market, which, for whatever reason, they did or did not want to buy. After they photographed these

objects, they placed them into new surroundings as a collection in a book. They showed a use that was not original, but avant-gardian use of the objects.

The reproducibility is a productive factor, which makes not only the transformation of the original, but also the canon of its autonomously approached copies possible. This fact pushes towards new perspectives from which to think about art, which naturally had an impact on the form and style of, for instance, painting[51]. By the simple fact that the human face was represented in photography, the painting lost much of its imitative meaning. Yet, it created the need to see objects differently, to emphasise new issues, forms and contents, which is what Expressionism or Cubism did, as Benjamin mentions on various occasions, as well as the works of Klee and Kandinsky, whom he admired[52].

The reproduced copy has certain advantages over the 'original'. For instance *firstly,* it is more independent than the original, as Benjamin conceives of the technically reproduced copy as more autonomous than the manual reproduction of art. Here, the ability to retouch the photo, to enlarge or decrease its side, to add various elements, reconstruct the old and vanished parts of it, all signify *adding* something to the original, and through this, the creation of a new object. *Secondly,* it can point out elements of perception that are not possible to perceive at first glance, or in the natural perception. The optical change or enlarging relates both to the natural perception and towards the 'optical unconsciousness'. The change, which expands the optic towards the instinctual, is mainly presented in Benjamin's *Kleine Geschichte der Photographie* (1931). When compared to the natural perception, the accuracy of the photograph creates the illusion of truthfulness, but it can also master other aspects of the original perception. On the other hand, the fact that it is possible to fake the original, for instance by retouching historical photographs, is analogous to the possibility of falsifying textual documents. In the form of a historical narrative the possibility to 'falsify' history, could be compared to Benjamin's critique of writing history 'as it really was' (cf. 1940: VI)[53].

Thirdly, the reproduction can be brought to places and situations that the original cannot, as it is, for instance, possible to mediate an acoustic concert reproduced as a record[54]. This connects to Benjamin's notion of how the reproduction of the original can move 'towards the perceiver' *(dem Aufnehmenden entgegenzukommen)* in both a physical or mental sense. It describes the sense of time and space that Benjamin has developed here, and which is distinguished in the following ways; as the distance transfers between the original and reproduced *work;* the way in which new *time and space* of the reproduction are created; and the way in which the awareness of the perceiving *subject* is seen as changing in a way which alters the quantitative approach towards *qualitative* understanding of time. The reproduction constitutes the possibility to locate a space in which all these elements are intertwined, but at the same time the space between the subject and object of perception is seen as transforming and expanding into an manipulative space.

I have already emphasised that by Benjamin, the relationship between of the 'image of the past' and its readability is called *dialectical,* which means that the

position of a reader or a viewer is seen in the cross-roads of past and present time. Through a dialectical image, the actor gains a position in the 'midst of events', which is closely connected to cognition and awareness of his or her present time. The concrete image that emerges in this temporal confrontation is a presentation of dialectics as 'standing still' (*im Stillstand* PW: 576-578). In connection with the visual experience of the subject, the rupture in experience confuses a chronological course of events and distracts the tendency to form a continuous narrative, in this case especially in the art history. If the idea of a photograph is temporalized, it appears as a document of the temporal and spatial distance between the original moment when it was taken and every present moment in which it is seen. The moments of taking and viewing a photograph introduce a cairological turn in time, which consists of moments that are seen as standtills *(Stillstellungen)* of the course of events.

However, it would be too simple to claim that, for instance, photographs are dialectical images *par excellence*. On the contrary, in order to understand their specific temporal meaning, it is more important to examine the *differences* between the idea of the dialectical image and the photo. In the Benjaminian dialectical image, the counterparts of perception and recognition are the experiencing subject and the perceived or recognised object, which is temporally placed in the Then. The photos are considered similar to any other documents, either as materialising the other side of the temporal experience, or as mediating the various parts between these two moments. This means that photo is only *one* of the possible documents that makes a dialectical experience between Now and Then *possible*.

It is true, that the flow of time is seen as suddenly interrupted in a photo, as it is a document of the 'freezing of time' in the moment in which it is taken. The dialectical image that is materialised in the work of art could be thought of as a moment, in which the homogeneous concept of art history shifts towards emphasising the importance of the single work of art, drawn out of its interpretation history. Yet, it could be noted here again, that Benjamin's dialectics do not necessarily aim at a reconciliation, which would mean ordering the objects in another narrative. Nor is the Benjaminian historiography identical with ordering photographic images one after without a critical aspect in the perception, as in a plain montage. The critical moment emerges in the 'completion' of the interpretation. The critique both interferes in the course of events and stresses the possibility for action, whether it be political or aesthetic action, or simply a new interpretation. The various notions on the 'Intelligibility of the Now', or of a dialectical image as the temporal confrontation between Now and Then, could be seen as forming and re-forming states of experience, which collect the aspects of a non-synchronizable present. In this sense, the vision is not focused towards the past document, but intensifies the experience of present moment, also making it perceptible for the subject.

Actually, Benjamin's conclusions on how reproducibility affects the work of art and its reception, are not outlined in the *Kunstwerk*, but in a short fragment called *Vorläufige Thesen*. They are, that the technical reproducibility of the work of art leads, firstly, to its rearrangement *(Ummontierung)*, secondly to its

actualisation and thirdly to its politicisation. Fourthly, it also leads to a wider consumption (*Verschleiß*) of art. Additionally, reproducibility makes the work of art an object of destruction (*Zerstreuung*) with regard to the continuity of the tradition, or rather in after-modern terms, it makes the work as an object of reconstruction. These possibilities are all especially included in the cinema (GS I.3: 1039). The tendency to acknowledge works of art from the earlier epoch might be seen as parallel to the Benjaminian salvaging of past events in the rewriting of history, which further describes the connection between thinking of history as a concept, and thinking about the work of art as a singular 'document' of time and history.

6. THE ORIGINAL AND THE COPY: TEMPORAL SIMILITUDE?

Not surprisingly, Benjamin states that the copy is made at separate times and spaces than the original, in other words, the unique bondage to the conditions of creating any work are changed through the reproduced copy and its re-creation: "Noch bei der höchstvollendeten Reproduktion fällt eines aus: das Hier und Jetzt des Kunstwerks – sein einmaliges Dasein an dem Orte, an dem es sich befindet." (1936a: 352)

What is somewhat surprising, though, is that Benjamin stresses both the temporal distance and change of the reproduced copy, as affecting not only the copy in-creation, but also backwards, to the "standpoint of the original" *(Der Standort des Originals)*. The material originality of the work naturally remains a component in a work that itself is not reproducible. Yet, the *idea* of origins is transformable, as it disappears and melts into the temporal-spatial conditions of future times, in which the work of art will be perceived. This implies the importance of making the distinction between the *concept* of the origins, which becomes temporalized and historically transformable, and on the other hand, the original as a *substance*. This distinction also affects the discussion on the definition of the work, which characterises its concrete 'standpoint', and also makes it twofold; transformable as a temporalized concept, and stable in the substantial origins of the work. The reproduction, if it is thought of in connection to the temporalized origins, characterises the disruption in a chronologically understood span of time, between the original and the copy.

Although Benjamin himself does not, it is helpful to make these distinctions in discussing the chances that the reproduction causes. This is also useful when the concept of aura becomes an issue. Namely, what Benjamin refers to as the decay *(Verkümmerung)* of aura, happens in the moment in which the authenticity conceived of as Here and Now of the original, disappears from the work. This is the first definition of aura in the essay. The degeneration of aura makes the difference between the technical and manual reproduction obvious,

in that some of the aspects of aura can still be retained in the manual copies. What does disappear in the *technical* reproduction is the originality understood as the one and only *authenticity (Echtheit)* of the work of art. However, as in the well-known formulation that Benjamin makes in *Kleine Geschichte der Photographie*, the early daguerreotype did manage to preserve the aura of the human eye (1931: 378-379, 1939c: 485).

The idea of origins is also included in the issue of the temporalization of history. The question in the *Theses* is, where can the origins be recognised and thematised? In the *Theses*, the origins of a *political Erkenntnis* are searched for in the crossing point of past and present, in which the political and historical actor attempts to catch the meaning of events out of their flow. In interpreting the *Kunstwerk* essay, I would say, that each reproduction (concerning the material aspect) in connection to the interpretation history, rethematizes the origins. In both historical terms and those of the Now-time, the moment of *intelligibility* of the origins is embedded in the understanding of the present moment. In the Theses, every historical phenomenon is seen as inherently open and re-definable through the present that recognises it. This is also the case in the *Kunstwerk*, as the work and its value and truth content, can be redefined in the course of its interpretative history.

In short, the origins are defined and redefined in *every present* time, and the concept of tradition is also temporalized through this specific view. The tradition, as discussed above, is conceived of as being interrelated with the idea of origins, and this makes it thoroughly transformable: "Die Einzigkeit des Kunstwerks ist identisch mit seinem Eingebettetsein in den Zusammenhang der Tradition. Diese Tradition selber ist freilich etwas durchaus lebendiges, etwas ganz außerordentlich Wandelbares." (1936a: 355) This transformation is not arbitrary, in that it is attached in the 'cairological' history to the moments of perception of the work in question. Furthermore, Benjamin's temporalization of both tradition and of origins, are tied with the idea of the unity of the work of art. If the tradition is seen as transformable, the 'authentic value' of any object can be rediscovered or redefined in the plurality of interpretative traditions, since it remains in its uniteness. In the plurality of the present times, the object is recognised *firstly*, as an object itself and *secondly*, it is viewed as transformable and related to the matter in which it is reflected. The unique moment of the original *(Hier und Jetzt des Originals)* melts away through the interpretation, however, this is the beginning point for the other works, since new versions of and interpretations on the substantial original are constantly emerging. *These confrontations between uniqueness and the constantly altering present are essential in re-conceptualising the work of art.* Basically, I do not consider that Benjamin's idea of temporalization of the 'origins' changes much throughout his work, especially if the texts from 1928, 1936 and 1940 are compared with each other. Although the idea of the origins is presented in a different light, depending on the matter of which it is discussed, it constantly moves toward the rethematization of origins in present context. Benjamin's temporalization is embedded in its dynamic character of the concept of origins itself, and it is used restoratively on the one hand, and as infinite and open on the other (cf. 1925: 226).

In Benjamin's circumscription of the art critique, the ruptures in emerging art, both original and in the canon of art history, could be characterised as specifying the distinction between commentary and critique. As the Benjaminian critique 'completes' the work, it strives towards characterising its truth content (*Wahrheitsgehalt*). The commentary confines the work to pre-canonised history, whereas the critique has a potentiality to acquire a new canon. What is puzzling here, which was also discussed with Benjamin's art critique, is that according to the way in which Benjamin sees the works as objects of critique, they are never possible to completely finalise. The true philosophical content of the artwork should remain open, as outlining the moment of the recognition of the unity and uniqueness of the object during any time. As Andrew Bowie remarks, the aspect of completing the work implies that it cannot be conceived of as complete 'in itself'. Every work remains open to interpretation, which could be referred to as an extension of the truth content of the work. The interdependence occurs between the work itself, which remains inert without the interpretation, and the interpretation that both reflects the work and 'completes' it or extends its truth content[55].

The truth is not final for all times, although it might be in a particular moment, and in language when the truth is acknowledged. Following Bowie's interpretation here, the work of art is incomplete, because its truth emerges via its being related to and reflected in other works within the medium of language. The truth of a (literary) work may only appear in relation to the incompleteness of other texts that do not reach its level of articulation. These relations cannot be completed in an interpretation, because the writing of a text that is related to the work, may change our understanding of that work itself. The interpretation also includes the moment of contingency in the individual work; it must be related to something beyond itself in order to transcend its contingency, but this process itself cannot be completed. This also includes the immanent critique and its paradox (cf. 1919: 69, 73, 77).

The reproduction affects the history of the work of art in that it changes it with every new reproduction and context of interpretation. This leads back to the question of how *history* of art is created (or perhaps recreated) through reproductions? The radical aspect of the reproduction is its possibility to change the temporality of the work itself, as it looses its finite character. Consequently, the task of the critique changes, because it is no longer to stress the work after its completion. The work of art itself begins to signify the incomplete object, as material for further reflection in the form of the immanent critique (1919: 77).

Art history is constructed through the reproductions and receptions of any work. Single pieces of art have their own histories, but their situation within the canon of interpretation is complex, which Benjamin already criticised in his 1923 letter to Florens Christian Rang (Br. 322). The idea of reflection as a critique of art, in the early German Romantic sense, comes to describe the way, in which the single works are related to each other, and also to history. The question of the variation between the original and the copy, and their specific temporal characterisations, adds another layer to this issue. Although Benjamin's way of approaching art slightly changes with his 'turn' towards materialistic

aesthetics, the ideas of a work of art as both 'monadic' and as independent from the concept of art and art critique are still in the *Kunstwerk* in reflective relation to the background of Benjamin's *own* concept of art. The social theory does gain importance in Benjamin's reflection on the role of art since the 1930's, although his earlier reflections do not completely seem to lose their effect, especially with regard to the issue of the art*work*, conceptualised as unique and discussed in the singular. The singular character of the work does aim at its reconsideration through the era of reproducibility, but the social conditions are not thoroughly able to change the unity of the work; they only change its interpretations and the discourse around the works.

7. CULT AND RITUAL IN TEMPORALIZING POLITICS

At this point in my interpretation the temporality of the works of art begin to shape as characterising the single works as points of beginnings and ruptures of aesthetic times and histories. As the monad-like figures, they remain autonomous in themselves, and become surrounded by critique, interpretations, traditions and reproductions. The heterogeneity of history, which I refer to as cairological, presents history as open and infinite in general, and in specific cases as including disruptive and accidental aspects also in aesthetic time. As has appeared in the Benjamin-immanent interpretation, it is possible to conceive of the works of art as a potential spaces for the Now-time consciousness, parallel to other historical artefacts. In this sense, the perception/recognition act of the aesthetic subject 'opens up' the work, and the act of recognition becomes the interpretation in the forms of critique and commentaries.

Following the previous discussion on the temporalization of the tradition and originality of art, I shall reflect further on the temporality of art. Yet, here I shall approach the subject through the issues of cult and ritual, and how they affect to the politicisation of art. The reproduction, as it has been interpreted as changing the conditions of art, moves art, in Benjamin's terms, 'towards the perceiver' and inspires an individual experience of the singular work. I claim that the essential moment in Benjaminian avant-garde occurs, when art is distinguished from its cultic or bourgeois content and looses its objective and distant character. At the same time, art begins to distance from the mythical character, and the work of art becomes more clearly interpreted in terms of the everyday, and in the perception of 'everyone'.

The way in which the work of art is comprehended as being bound to its tradition, is also characterised as *cult*. Especially in the third version of the *Kunstwerk* essay, Benjamin merges the concept of aura with the cult value.

Here, the specific auratic mixture of time and place become apparent in the formulation of the cult value of the work of art, as it is connected within the categories of the spatial or temporal perception: "Die Definition der Aura als 'einmalige Erscheinung einer Ferne, so nah sie sein mag', stellt nichts anderes dar als die Formulierung des Kultwerts des Kunstwerks in Kategorien der raum-zeitlichen Wahrnehmung." (1939c: 480, fn 7)[56]

Benjamin gives another example of aura in relation to the experience of the landscape and nature, as he describes the dualistic feeling of distance and presence, through the thought-image in the simultaneous perception of distant mountains and the branch of a tree, by a relaxed observer of nature on a Sunday afternoon[57]. As they appear simultaneously, these appearances of nature both seem attainable for the perceiving subject, although one is always unreachable. The inaccessibility of something that appears close and accessible is an element that concretely characterises Benjamin's idea of the cultic distance. The cultic (auratic) distance in art is related to the character of the object of art, through which it is 'traditionally' conceived. In this sense, the notions of time and place regarding aura, are not only tied to the concept of originality. Moreover, the reflections signify the Here and Now of the work of art (*Hier und Jetzt*, 1935a: 437), the presence as opposed to the absence. The concept of aura signifies the stance of art as a peculiar web *(sonderbares gespinst)*, which is composed of time and place themselves. Aura is a phenomenon in which time and place are merged, so that also the concepts of distance and closeness are perplexed. What might be confusing, is that here aura does not mean the authenticity of the object, but it emphasises the fluid nature of the ideas of time and place.

How, then, did the reproduction destroy some of the cultic distance? Benjamin makes a temporal/spatial distinction between an image that is perceived without a cultic distance *(aus nächster Nähe)* and reproduction in the same manner he discusses the aura. If the 'image', for instance, is a theatrical scene, then the terms of perception naturally are different than in the film-scene. In theatre, the relationship between actors and audience includes the auratic presence, which disappears in the reproduction, because the reproduced image is presented as a copy *(Abbild)*. This *Abbild* is characterised through its transitory nature and its being possible to repeat *(Flüchtigkeit und Wiederholbarkeit)*, whereas the actual auratic image is unique and permanent (*Einmaligkeit und Dauer* 1936a:355). The actors in theatre are 'present' also in an identificative meaning, which is the presence that can be turned towards the distance through a constructed effect, such as in Brecht's alienation effect *(Verfremdungseffect),* in which the ideas of distance and closeness become actual again. Although Brecht did not see the connection between his ideas and Benjamin's essay (especially concerning the concept of aura), Benjamin did make the connection explicit in the 12th footnote of the third version of the essay (1939c: 484), as he shortly discussed, how the work of art is conceived in altering forces of production. Benjamin further discusses Brecht's epic theatre as creating astonishment rather than empathy. The astonishment is produced by causing a disruption in both the closeness (presence) of and the identification with the cha-

racters in play. In text, the idea of interruption emerges in the sphere of quotations, in which the quote involves an interruption of the context. The disruption produces a sudden distance instead of closeness of the text. This is a reason, why for Benjamin, epic theatre is specifically quotable, and as such, it is by definition also a gestic theatre. *"Gesten zitierbar zu machen" ist eine der wesentlichen Leistungen des epischen Theaters(...). Denn Gesten erhalten wir um so mehr, je häufiger wir einen Handelnden unterbrechen* (1939b: 536).

In film, the whole setting is that of an absence. In a reproduced image, the 'auratic' cover is broken, the real and timeless uniqueness of the work of art becomes apparent, but also detached from its ritual ties[58]. However, the distance can also be broken in the way, in which the 'man on the street' becomes a potential 'actor' in cinema as in *Soviet Cinema*. As a phenomenon of the scattering of the auratic distance, this corresponds to the development of the newspaper, as the reader can also become the writer of an article, in other words, when the basic character of the distinction between the author and the public changes during modernity (cf. 1936a: 371-372). Objects without artificial auratic value also cross the line between art and non-art, and all objects become potential art objects, like the famous example of this being the Surrealist *objet trouvés* by Marcel Duchamp.

If aura is now understood as the confusion of distance and closeness in the perception, the cultic aspect is significant to understand this character. This idea of aura, which emerges from the pre-modern perception of nature, becomes possible to artificially construct in the modern culture. According to Benjamin, auratic art can never free itself from rituality (1936a: 356). Still, if art is interpreted as a political phenomenon, a distinction should be made on the basis of *how* the art is interpreted as being tied to the ritual. The political interpretation remarks on the important change in the production of art, especially when the authenticity of the art suffers; its social function is seen as being overturned *(umgewälzt)*. Here, Benjamin suggests that the *transfer from ritual towards politics* discloses the moment of the new, from which the rituality of aura would be absent, and that art would become closer to the perceiver, and would be dropped down to earth from its art-historical mythical stance. "An die Stelle ihrer Fundierung aufs Ritual hat ihre Fundierung auf eine andere Praxis zu treten: nämlich ihre Fundierung auf Politik." (1936a: 357)

In the first version of the *Kunstwerk*, Benjamin describes the rituality of art as being essentially tied to its theological foundation: "Mit anderen Worten: der einzigartige Wert des 'echten' *Kunstwerks* ist immer theologisch fundiert." (1935: 441) In the second version, he modifies the sentence and changes the theological to the ritual: "Mit anderen Worten: *Der einzigartige Wert des 'echten' Kunstwerks hat seine Fundierung immer im Ritual.*" (1936a: 356) Following this, Benjamin notices how the aspect of secularisation in this foundation is still present in art in which the *value of beauty (Schönheitswert)* is apparent in the secularised rituals. This makes the direct connection to the critique of *l'art pour l'art*, which celebrates the pure beauty of art as a secularised ritual. However, when we look at the second and third versions of the text, the theological aspect has vanished. In the third version, the use value *(Gebrauchswert)* of the

work of art is added to describe the secularised idea of ritual: "Mit anderen Worten: *der einzigartige Wert des 'echten' Kunstwerks hat seine Fundierung im Ritual, in dem es seinen originären und ersten Gebrauchswert hatte.*" (1939c: 480) In itself, the 'use value' signifies the later added Marxist terminology that became to replace the 'theological value'.

I use this variation of Benjamin's formulation as outlining one example of how the original content of the essay was perplexed in the later interpretations, however, I do not intend to follow this further. Instead, I stress how the importance of understanding the function of rituality takes us towards an understanding of art in a political sense. As Benjamin suggests, the change from the ancient rituals has transformed towards the political art. The meaning of this political aspect becomes evident if we contrast it with the original theological vocabulary, but not to the ritual nature of politics. Here the political should be explicitly *distinguished from the theological*, and not conceived of as an elementary connection to it, as a *political theology (politische Theologie)*, as is suggested in many Benjamin-commentaries.

Namely, the way, in which the political is understood in terms of the rituality, is directly associated with fascist (Nazi) politics, which in Benjamin's view, continues the ritual value of art in its praxis of *aestheticization of politics (Ästhetisierung der Politik)*[59]. This is also the connection Benjamin makes with regard to *l'art pour l'art* as illustrating theology of art *(Theologie der Kunst)*, which shows itself as transferring of the idea of 'pure art' to war (1930: 240). The German National Socialists used the traditionally established artistic values for their own ideological purposes, and through this they also established an ideological interpretation of concepts like tradition, origins and ritual. In Benjamin's claim of the transformation from cultic value towards exhibition value, he used the example of the Greek idea of art, which was based on the eternal value. The cult was based in eternity because the ancient works of art were not intended to be technically reproduced, but rather, were assumed to remain as they were 'for ever' (1936a: 361). The technical reproducibility also included the transfer towards exhibition value of art.

Here, the temporal idea of eternity merges with that of cultic value, as the earliest works of art are also used in the service of the ritual. The eternal idea is embedded (reproduced) in fascist politics in the same way, in which it is expressed in cultic art. For instance, as Benjamin describes in his *Theorien der deutschen Faschismus*, the cultic element of war is expressed by the idea of 'eternal' war (1930: 241). In art, this emphasis on the temporality of the eternal and cultic is especially visible in sculpture. The Nazis reproduced the idea and shape of the Greek sculpture by materialising the cultic eternity in a new disguise; the statues, sculpted mainly by Arno Breker and Josef Torak, were huge, and they signified non-humanity, divinity and cultic distance that were to be established through the new form of German *Mensch*. However, they not only expressed the new ideals of the National Socialist aesthetics, but also participated in creating the new human ideal and purified human being, participating in the construction of the 'eternal Germany'.

All in all, the aura becomes a dividing concept in discussing the political

nature of the work of art. The artificially created aura means the way in which Benjamin connects art to the fascist (Nazi) propaganda as he names cult and ritual as fascist aesthetic principles. As Benjamin understands the cult as being essentially tied to the concept of aura, he refers to the manner how the old works of art are created in order to serve the magic, and later religious rituals. This historical origin means, that if the traditional meaning of art is retained, it cannot be approached as free from its ritualistic function (1936a: 356)[60]. Only re-conceptualising of art can liberate it from this function, and the way in which Benjamin interprets the role of avant-garde art from the beginning of the century, is by emphasising its attempt to free itself from the rituals through breaking the forms of tradition. The detachment of tradition almost became a self-purpose, for instance, in Dadaism, which denied the idea of contemplation and the eternal value of art, and emphasised the uniqueness of the moment.

Benjamin returns to these issues in the last part of the *Kunstwerk,* in which he claims that the fulfilment *(die Vollendung)* of *l'art pour l'art* occurs during the war, which is the aesthetic extremity of the attachment to technique and ritual (1936a: 384). The politics of the avant-garde, as well as the potential awakening from history as mythos, are seen as a negation to this. Unfolding this ideological structure of politicised ritual and cult was an implicit task in Benjamin's critique of the 'false continuity' in fascist politics. The destruction of the mythical structure of power would become a praxis of 'real politics'. As such, the actualisation of the issues embedded in artistic avant-garde might lead towards the *politicization of aesthetics* on the side of the communists, if the element embedded in the disruption of aesthetic production and perception were to be applied to their political praxis.

In the passage in which Benjamin discusses *l'art pour l'art*, he interprets it as being a reaction against the 'real revolutionary medium of reproduction', the photography. As Peter Bürger notes, the claim is simplistic, since the movement of the pure art was not merely a reaction to photography[61]. If we continue to decipher aspects of ritual in Benjamin's essay, the difference between pure art and photography is shown here as being in opposition to each other. As the *l'art pour l'art* preserves the magic and ritual, the avant-garde focuses, according to Benjamin, on breaking this tie. As the *l'art pour l'art* manifests a crisis in the arts (cf. 1929: 301), pure politics manifests, in the fascist form, a crisis in social conditions. At this point Bürger pays attention to Benjamin's claim of the transfer from rituality towards politics, but he does not consider what politics might more specifically mean in terms of detachment from the eternal nature of art. Instead, as Bürger identifies Benjamin's attempt with a Marxist praxis, he looses Benjamin's distinction between cultic and avant-gardian political art.

8. RE-DEFINING THE CULT

As the temporality of the cult is described above as embedded in the eternal idea of art, the technical reproduction affects it by introducing an interruptive element to this temporality. Consequently, the change of the function of art from the ritual towards politics, is also connected to the notion of the disappearance of its autonomy; the illusion *(Schein)* of autonomy disappears through the reproducibility: "Indem das Zeitalter ihrer technischen Reproduzierbarkeit die Kunst von ihrem kultischen fundament löste, erlosch auf immer der Schein ihrer Autonomie." (1936a: 362) As the eternal value of art is based on the constancy and permanency of the work of art, it implies that the work itself cannot be improved upon. Not only the temporal structure, but also the social and political conditions of the work of art come forth through the transformation caused by reproducibility of art (cf. 1936a: 361). Following Benjamin, art has always been tied to its political and social conditions, and the rupture between the connections might be the potential substance of their re-interpretation. The change that occurs through the technical reproduction only makes this connection more apparent. This relationship between work of art and political tendencies included in every artistic epoch, is clearly expressed in Benjamin's answer to Oscar Schmitz's film critique on Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* in 1927: "Daß jedem Kunstwerk, jeder Kunstepoche politische Tendenzen einwohnen, ist – da sie ja historische bilde des Bewußtseins sind – eine Binsenwahrheit. (...) Die technischen Revolutionen – das sind die Bruchstellen der Kunstentwicklung, an denen die Tendenzen je und je, freiliegend sozusagen, zum Vorschein kommen. In jeder neuen technischen Revolution wird die Tendenz aus einem sehr verborgenen Element der Kunst wie von selber zum manifesten. Und damit wären wir endlich beim Film." (1927b: 752) In 1927, Benjamin's materialist aesthetic idea is very obvious. He criticises the American Groteskfilme, which he interprets as representing and glorifying the bourgeois, and he generally opposes them to Eisenstein's *Potemkin*, which he greatly admires.

Since the film is tied to reproduction by its basic conditions, Benjamin sees the most obvious rupture, with regard to both the previous history of art as well as perception, as happening in the cinema. He points out the transformability as its specific value, which also contains the possibility for constant improvement *(Verbesserungsfähigkeit)*. The other reasons for being able to see the rupture exactly in the cinema have already been discussed above, like the reproduction, which affects the transferring of the aura, the detachment from the cult value, ideas of temporally permanent tradition and redefining the origins of work of art. As the cinema changes the eternal value *(Ewigkeitswert)* of art, it illustrates the media that might be the most effective in defending the aesthetic vocabulary that was by no means to be left for fascist usage, as Benjamin expresses in the beginning of the essay. Yet, exactly this idea shows the ambiguity of Benjamin's example, because, as he was well aware of, film becomes the most powerful medium of manipulating perception, especially by the Nazis.

The revolution of perception and art production that Benjamin considers of as happening through the cinema is multiple. For example, Benjamin refers to film as a *prism,* through which we can 'see' our everyday surroundings in a different way, as our surroundings are reflected via camera (1927b: 752). The space of a prism is small, and is analogous to *Camera Obscura,* which Marx used as an example in his critique of the bourgeois culture. However, as the *Camera Obscura* describes the reverse way of viewing the surrounding society, the prism is not reversed, but it is a metaphor for 'different perception' *(anders Wahrnehmen)*. The change of perception is not only implanted in the new contents or forms that film constantly develops, but it also describes how the potentiality and reproducibility offer a critical position on art history, and how the technique interferes with human perception. Generally, Benjamin claims that there is an history of perception that also is the history of myth (GS VI: 67). The mythos is created over the course of human history, as one 'learns' both the ways in which to perceive the world (left and right, above and under), and also the ways to perceive art. This mythical perception was among issues, which began to scatter within the new forms of technology and art, especially within the cinema[62].

In the prismatic reflection, however, the perception of direct surroundings changes, as it "blows out the sadness of the bureau, streets, fabrics and railways..." (1927b: 752). As the prism slightly changes the perception, it includes the idea of the subjective actualisation of the surrounding events through images. The reflection through cinematic images briefly emancipates us from the immediate perception of our surroundings through the specific distance that is practised in film. Benjamin argues that although we might assume something else, the life is simultaneously unfinished and yet, it is already made; this is the ambiguity which is made obvious via cinema and both the cinema and photography make the moments more apparent for the subjective consciousness. Benjamin partly returns to the old discussion on the world as existent itself, which he again derives from German Romanticism. Art is seen as a worldly creation, but, as it appears more emphasised in Benjamin's later work, the

world is not singular and constant, rather, it is comprised of cultural surprises and accidents, moments that might pass by unnoticed.

The possibilities that might lead to a new aesthetic way of thinking altogether, are outlined in various and repetitive ways in Benjamin's works. The idea of action, whether it is conceived as historical (1940), critique (1919 and 1922), or aesthetics (the essays since 1929) describes both the life and history as open and incomplete. Their 'completion' is regarded as one form of individual action. The reflection of the present moment means to discover the world as it already exists, although it is still possible to reach and interfere with the individual action and interpretation. Hence, the shift from cultic value of art through the reproducibility, naturally cannot be argued as being complete even in Benjamin's essay. Although Benjamin recognises the moment in which art begins to loose itself from the cultic fundaments, this does not mean that the cultic aspect would disappear, nor that the cultic value could not be *used* in technologically reproduced art. For instance, this becomes apparent as Benjamin criticises Abel Gance for almost forcing cultic or sacral value on the films that had almost lost it: "Es ist sehr lehrreich zu sehen, wie das bestreben, den Film der 'Kunst' zuzuschlagen, diese Theoretiker nötigt, mit einer Rücksichtlosigkeit ohnegleichen kultische Elemente in ihn hineinzuinterpretieren." (1936a: 363)

From the political viewpoint, the attempt at controlling or influencing the perception is present during the moment in which actor's performance is filmed. This is not only present in the cinema, but also in emerging media, including the advantages for political representation. Benjamin sites the relationship between media and politics as a crisis in political representation: "Die Krise der Demokratien läßt sich als eine Krise der Ausstellungsbedingungen des politischen Menschen verstehen. Die Demokratien stellen den Politiker unmittelbar in eigener Person, und zwar vor Repräsentanten aus." (1936a: 369, fn 11) Here, the relationship between actor and audience shifts in order to describe the public sphere, in which the politician or MP presents him or herself to the 'political audience'. Interestingly, Benjamin considers the 'audience' of the representative as restricted to the space of the parliament, and not including people as a 'street audience'. As the technical reproduction changes the role of an actor, it also changes the role of a politician, as Benjamin does not consider there to be a huge difference between their performances. Benjamin's description of this phenomena as a crisis, implies that in his view of politics, which reverses to its mirror-image through representation, the representation has the opposite effect than in the change in the actor's performance.

Benjamin notes that the political audience in parliaments vanishes when the politicians are transferred to the screen. As discussed above Benjamin makes a temporal/spatial distinction between a present image and a reproduction; the first difference between the actors in theatre and film was the change from image *(Bild)* to its reproduction *(Abbild)*. This also describes the change from a unique image to a repeatable one (1936a: 355), as Benjamin stresses the idea of the mirror as the mediated representation of the bodies. The way in which the cinema presents the bodies through the mirror-like alienation *(Befremdung)*, is

also seen as the way in which the cinematic images are 'transported' in front of the mass (1936a: 369). Especially in viewing the traditional narrative films, which focus on affectionate identification among the spectators, it is important to note the meaning of the mirror: it is the *mirror image* of the actor that is displayed in front of the masses. As the camera reproduces the action, the actor loses the auratic relation to his or her own body and act, which in turn causes the moment of alienation. The second stage of this occurs during the representation, which will be presented to the audience.

As Benjamin calls the change in the political representation a 'crisis', I would understand these notions as related to the specific historical context, since the first massive documentation of the politician 'on screen' happens in Leni Riefenstahl's, *Triumph des Willens* (1935), marking the reinvention of political media through the cinema. The Riefenstahl's documentation of Nürnberg Party convention, is a gigantic human theatre, in which Hitler is the director and the protagonist, and the camera is greatly significant in the creation of the personal spell of his character. As the film shows Hitler as face to face with masses, it visualises Benjamin's concern regarding the crisis of the parliament and the new form of election, in which the winner is the "champion, the star and the dictator" (1936a: 169, fn 11).

Naturally, the consequences of the media politics, have often been speculated. For instance, following Michael Shapiro's analysis in *The Political Rhetoric of Photography*, the photos of the political leaders, might actually have a depoliticising effect on the personalities. Here, the depoliticisation implies that the view is turned from a public event to the individual politicians through close-ups. Similarly, when the early photographs showed close-up scenes of kings, aristocrats and political leaders to the mass, they also had a demystifying effect, while the photos humanised the cultic figures[63]. In Benjamin's terms this would mean the destruction of aura and cult, this being an opposite effect than that which appeared in his historical context. Following Benjamin further, the election which now happens as the politicians are situated in front of the camera, thus becoming 'actors' in this sense, are also changing the character of the elections. The selection is now made in front of the camera, where the artificial spell of personality can win the election.

The cult of the leaders or the aura of the public events has become transferred into the 'spell of the personality'. If Benjamin is modified through Weber, this also create an artificial charisma surrounding the politicians[64]. Contemporarily, the artificial charisma is more effectively created through the development, in which the viewing scene is no longer the cinematic mass audience, the ideal of 1930's Germany, but, rather, the domestic space. Yet, the dictator and the star are still present in the domestic television audiences, as a constructed public image. This image follows the development that Benjamin described as the change of the personal aura, as the auratic presence disappeared in the reproduction. The image of representation *(Abbild)* is characterised through its transitory nature and repetitiveness, whereas the actual, auratic image is unique and permanent (1936a: 355). As the 'auratic' cover is broken, it can construct a new public ritual, in which the difference between the real

and the produced image is consciously blurred[65]. In the after-modern era, the tendency that Benjamin wanted to see as revolutionary, liberating from the rituality of perception and experience, has instead tended to lead to a new ritualization, which is now called 'public image'.

9. THE POLITICS OF AVANT-GARDE

Musicians smash your instruments
blind men take the stage
Art is a pretension warmed by the
Timidity of the urinary basin, the hysteria born in The Studio[66]

Benjamin's essay tends to show the importance to interpret art either as detached from or bound to the ritual and cult, which simultaneously outlines his theory of the political avant-garde. The art which re-creates and artificially continues praxis of ritual or cult is not conceived of as political in this sense (cf. 1936a: 357). Rather, the constructed rituality, or re-created aura, might be called either ideological or a 'polity' of art, which means that it draws its legitimation from the continuity of historical time. In opposite, the temporality of avant-garde is crystallised in the idea of creating a 'demand' for a form of art that has not yet been invented. "Es ist von jeher eine der wichtigsten Aufgaben der Kunst gewesen, eine Nachfrage zu erzeugen, für deren volle Befriedigung die Stunde noch nicht gekommen ist." (1936a: 378). Benjamin's quote of Breton stresses the familiar idea of avant-garde, which reflects the traits of the future as being not-yet-existent, although here it is expressed with rather atypical 'economic' vocabulary. Recognising the need for the 'not-yet', extends the future towards the present in artistic means, and at the same time creates a temporal reversal of perception of the work of art, which is traditionally approached from the point of the past towards the present.

In this sense, Dada manifested an interesting turn in the history of art, which, according to Benjamin, was the attempt to accomplish a development up to which painting and literature had led until the beginning of the 20th century. This movement was a short transitional period in art history, as short, as for instance the original Italian futurist movement before the first World

War, and it was accompanied by the development of cinema. Yet, Dada included almost all the aspects that characterised the Benjaminian avant-garde. Firstly, Dadaist art differed radically from the canon of art history. Since the periods of art history were interpreted traditionally through the ideas of progress and decay, in the Dada, the degeneration emerged from the energy of the work of art itself. Secondly, Dadaists did not try to hide the barbarism but, rather, brought it to the level of expression, and their intention was to create a scandal and arouse public indignation (1936a: 379). The third interesting element in Dada and also later in Surrealism, was that they did not exclude the irrational and the evil, but created an artistic legitimisation of their presence in the society. The evil emerged to oppose the bourgeois concept of isolated and autonomous art, which did not manage to detach itself from the fear of degeneration.

According to Benjamin's characterisation, the Dadaists destroyed the remains of aura in poetry and painting, for instance, through the obscenity of their poems, and their use of 'trashy' language. The cultural contradiction was implanted in the impossibility to understand the similar value of aesthetic experience in perceiving both Hans Arp's and Derain's work, or reading the poems of Rilke and August Stramm during the same time. This contradiction forced the change of perception and reception of art, which caused scandals and rethinking of aesthetic values (1936a: 378). However, the revolts themselves were still dependent on the society, and this forced art to turn its energy towards itself as a form of self-destruction.

Dada's possibilities to move further from the point of their protest slowly vanished. Although it could not survive in its own nihilism, it was also a true example of the disappearance of aura in the form of contemplation and eternity-value. Yet, if understood as the moment of Here and Now, the aura of originality and presence, did remain in Dadaist works. The important route that Dada found, was to identify a potential cultural sphere that would break the ties of cult, and through this, the mythical idea of art. This supported the shift towards the Surrealism[67]. However, the final detachment from the mythical in art did not happen in Surrealism either, since, for instance Aragon's 1924 *Vague de Rêves*, remained, for Benjamin, in the sphere of mythos and dreams (1929: 296).

The effect of Dada was not meant to be contemplative or mental, but, rather, physical, which was similar to the shocking influences of the early cinematic experiences. The art of Dada reminded a shot *(Geschoß)* that, for Benjamin, was also physically so effective that it could not be perceived outside of a subjective experience: "Aus einem lockenden Augenschein oder einem überredenden Klanggebilde wurde das Kunstwerk bei den Dadaisten zu einem Geschoß. Es stieß dem Betrachter zu. Es gewann eine taktische Qualität." (1936a: 379) As, the optical meant perception, the tactile referred to the concrete senses, the distinction that further stressed the non-contemplative character Benjamin found as essential in the avant-garde movements. Another example that Benjamin made between tactile and optic perception was architecture, as the buildings are perceived in both ways, through their concrete use and percep-

tion. In this sense, Benjamin emphasised the use and not the contemplative character of the artwork. In the cinema, the tactile character was embedded in the way, in which it was able to inspire the emergence of mass movements, which was also described as a shock moment in the perception (1936a: 381).

9.1. Towards the Image-space

Especially in Das *Passagen-Werk,* Benjamin searched for a possibility to interrupt the state of cultural laziness of the previous century, which he described, for instance, by the concept of phantasmagoria. Throughout the search, Benjamin found himself in the metaphoric 'limit space' between sleeping and awakening, which he also used in describing the difference between the 19h and 20th centuries. As he reversed the Heraclit ideas, *die Wachenden haben ihre Welt gemeinsam, die Schlafenden jeder eine für sich*, Benjamin referred to the task he set for himself in *Das Passagen-Werk*, namely, to awaken the 19th century from its collective dream. In intellectual terms, the limit-space could characterise the state in which Benjamin worked with the elements of text and images[68]. In searching for a theoretical way out of the canon of historical interpretations, he found a material in images, which could potentially break the historical repetition. Like the Surrealists, Benjamin was fascinated by the non-sensuous similarities, not only in the theoretical, but also in the practical sense, which came to describe his attempts to find a new praxis of writing, as practised, besides *Das Passagen-Werk*, also in the *Einbahnstraße* from 1928.

Also the essay on Surrealism signifies a turn in Benjamin's thought, in which he begins to detach from the mainly literary idea of images, such as allegory and metaphor, which are important issues in his earlier work. Instead and probably influenced by Surrealist art, he begins to move towards the 'space of images' signifying the non-discursive sphere between language, thinking and writing. This is, as he characterises it, a direction towards a space in which literature, theories and phantasms are put aside, and he turns towards experiences (cf. 1929: 297). Here, Benjamin's idea of experiences, as it is constructed as the critique of the Kantian and especially of Neokantian concepts, finds a space as an inspiration. The creative experience is called profane illumination (*profane Erleuchtung*, 1929: 297), which makes an interesting connection to Benjamin's concept of redemption (*Erlösung*), outlined in *Über den Begriff der Geschichte*. From my point of view, the idea is also important in understanding the political and revolutionary character that he sets on the shoulders of the Surrealists[69].

The concept of *Erlösung* outlines a temporal contradiction, in which the Jewish and Christian-signified temporalities are situated in opposition to one another. Benjamin's use of the concept in the II, III and VI Theses, is connected to this contradiction. Within this specific concept, Benjamin problematizes the autonomy of the Christian, and in the Surrealism essay explicitly the Catholic religious idea, which places the *Erlösung* as an event in the temporal limit between life and death. On the contrary, Benjamin's attribute of the *profane*

emphasises the possibility of the both individual experience and action through realising the *Erlösung* in the present time. This view renders the possibility of redemption within everyone's reach and in everyday. Benjamin brings redemption to the reach of everyday by emphasising the touching of passing moments, the presence of people and Eros, and moments of action, which connect the otherwise abstract ideas of time and history to individual experiences. As discussed in terms of history, the *Erlösung* is not a causal or logical cause of the previous history, but it forms a rupture, which implies the revision of the earlier interpretations on history[70]. The gap that emerges between the historical and the present adds the political element to history, since through redemption, the earlier history is considered to scatter.

The *profane Erleuchtung* meant something like the 'extatization' of experience, and Benjamin considered Surrealists to be able to fulfil this experience by combining the collective action with an individual experience[71]. For instance, he interpreted André Breton's *Nadja* as a turn to a profane illumination, in which the point of reference was the esoteric and erotic experience of love, as opposed to religious illumination (1929: 298). The way in which Surrealists attempted to overcome the restrictive idea of the irrational individual, was to combine the sensual and scientific-analytical experience in artistic expression. The possibility of a profane illumination included the idea of happiness, which was not transferred to eternity, but, rather, into the present as it was interpreted in Benjamin's second Thesis of History, in which the happiness is also connected to the concept of redemption (1940: II).

Here, the individual actor is considered to exist within the double-space of its physical space, as well as in its temporal and spatial 'surroundings' signifying the action. The history, or the 'new time', which is created from the moment of the Now, is shaped into the world of integral actuality. The Surrealists were, according to Benjamin, the only example of a movement in his contemporary time that was free of moral 'dilettantism'. During that time, Benjamin was inspired by something that might be called 'anarchist sensibility', and he found the correspondence between the Bakunian and the Surrealist concepts of freedom (1929: 303-304). According to Löwy's interpretation, the Surrealism was a visionary movement that was profoundly libertarian and also in search of a possible convergence with Communists[72].

The importance of experience, especially if characterised by cairologic sense, gives a meaning to the actor and action as following the insight of the *Jetztzeit*. The thought introduces an anarchic element to the action, since its starting point is in subjective and temporal consciousness, and not in the collective. This is also the time of the Surrealists' spontaneous action. In the action, experience and action are intertwined, which Benjamin characterises by the concept of the Image-space *(Bildraum)*. The Bildraum, only briefly mentioned in *Der Sürrealismus* and in Benjamin's other work, is, however, one of the most important concepts Benjamin created. The Image-space, which simultaneously means a body- and an Image-space *(Leib-und Bildraum)*, forms a shift in the idea of the image as a representation, as it states the essential interactivity between the aesthetic object and subject. In the Image-space the subject is supposed to 'enter' into the image at the same time and in the same manner as it

enters a physical space. In his early essay, *Zur Malerei*, Benjamin describes the Image-space as residing in the relationship between visual perception and the imperceptible 'inner space' of the painting (1920: 113-114). Here, the non-representational *(Nicht-Darstellbare)* and the material parts of the painting are intertwined. In this aesthetic idea, the bodily space, the distance, the spatial aspects of the body and the more illusory aspects of remembrance or dream reality are interconnected[73].

Through the Image-space, Benjamin calls for the de-construction of the earlier conception of a subject and its psychic structure, as well as for the destruction of the integral actuality of the world. The idea compels action, which is not only metaphoric, but also physical. In this action, the ideas of profane illumination and Image-space are intertwined, and its aim is more or less to realise the revolutionary potential and freedom of action, which Benjamin discovered in the avant-garde art (1929: 309-310). According to Sigrid Weigel, in the political Image-space, the relations between ideas and action; imagining and representation by actors or agents are contingent upon each other[74]. The situation is unpredictable, and as such, it illustrates the realisation of the experience in its genuine form, as the Image-space also joins with the body-space: "Dennoch aber (...) wird dieser Raum noch Bildraum, und konkreter, Leibraum sein." (1929: 309) This conjoins the more theoretical idea of the Now of Intelligibility to a corporeal (or bodily) representation of action. Here, politics and its temporal actuality become both as emphasised and explicitly distinguished from 'poetic politics' *(dichterische Politik)*, or from a metaphorical understanding of politics. There appears to be no distance between subject and image, as Benjamin rejects the idea of an image as something metaphorical. Its whole occurrence is seen as instantaneous, and as directly conjoining the variety of aspects appearing in it[75].

In general, I also interpret the concept of the Image-space less in revolutionary terms of action, and more in terms of how it adds another dimension to Benjamin's ideas of images, since, as noted above, it detaches from the concept of a literary image to the larger space of images. In the twentieth *fin de siècle*, the earlier revolutionary character of the concept also reaches the contemporary terms, as its thematization is closely connected to visual culture and the cinema. This change could be described as the interaction between the subject and the image, which has now become even more concrete, since the use of multimedia and digital technology. This interactivity constructs the difference between the earlier way of 'viewing' images, such as chemical photography, and the contemporary one, which transfers the relation between the viewer and the viewed onto the stage, on which the viewer has practically the ability to 'lead' the images and texts. This also highlights the difference between viewing television and searching through the Internet and the use of multimedia, as the latter is increasingly non-linear and dependent on the users own interests and initiation[76]. Naturally, for example, CD Roms are limited to the knowledge that they offer, and by the cultural restrictions concerning the information and usage. Here, however, the transfer in perception and experience occurs towards the idea of an Image-space, which is actual and not without political implication.

10. THE AMBIGUOUS IDEA OF THE MASS

When the two modern phenomena, the change of perception and the decay of aura are examined in connection to each other, the issue becomes transferred to a social level, which leads to a discussion of how the mass *(die Masse)* is related to the new ways of perception. The whole question of how 'the reality' is mediated to the people includes the manipulative aspect. Yet, in the *Kunstwerk,* Benjamin exemplifies three parallel ways of characterising and producing the mass as an object of perception within the new reproduction technique. The first way is through Soviet constructivist film, and the second, through fascist propaganda. The third side, which seemed the most harmless in his contemporary time, but which over time actually became the most persistent, is the Hollywood film as a form of mass entertainment.

The importance of the idea that Benjamin expressed concerning the concept of the mass, was expressed by Adorno in the letter dated 18.3.1936. Adorno wrote that Benjamin's idea of the proletariat's disintegration as a mass through revolution was one of the deepest and most powerful ideas in political theory that had confronted him since *Staat und Revolution*: "Zu dem tiefsten und mächtigsten an politischer Theorie zählen, das mir (Adorno/kl) begegnet ist, seit ich Staat und Revolution [von Lenin] las." (GS VII.2: 663) Still, the notes in which Benjamin developed his idea of mass, were left out of the published German version of the essay (1939c), until the second version was published in Benjamin's *Nachträge*.

In 1980, for instance the editors of the German magazine *Alternative* discussed Benjamin's concept of mass from the cinematic viewpoint. They focused on the analysis of the impact of the mechanical ways of perception, in which Benjamin had, in their view, gone further than Adorno. According to Nagel, although Benjamin wrote about mass in general, his particular focus was on the position of the individual. The *Massenpsychologie* in itself did not interest Benjamin as much as it interested, for instance, Horkheimer during that time.

Instead, Benjamin was interested in how the mass was formed and scattered, and how the individual experience and perception changed in relation to the mass and mass phenomena[77].

This aspect became emphasised in the second version of the *Kunstwerk,* as Benjamin distinguished between the bourgeois and the revolutionary mass. I argue that Benjamin did not only focus on the individual, as Nagel notes, but he also distinguished the petty bourgeois from the revolutionary mass. Because the petty bourgeois was not conceived of as a class, it should have appeared even more coherently as a mass and, as Benjamin called it, as a compact form of mass (1936a: 370). Also, the mass what Benjamin described in his work on Baudelaire, represented the passive and coherent mass: "Es handelt sich um nichts anderes als um die amorphe Menge der Passanten, um Strassenpublikum." (1939a: 618) Here, the concept of street audience *(Strassenpublikum)* is especially interesting, since this was the same audience that Benjamin later saw in front of the screens of both Hollywood films and German Nazi films. On the other hand, Benjamin noted that in their descriptions of the mass, authors like Victor Hugo, and social theorists like Hegel, Marx and Engels, did not emphasise its individual characteristic, but instead described the mass as homogeneous, ignorant or formless. The mass consciousness appeared as a form of a scattered experience *(Erlebnis),* describing the impact of the shock-effects in the modern Metropolis[78].

Benjamin describes the petty bourgeois mass as non-transparent *(undurchdringlich),* and their action as panic-like: "So tragen die Manifestationen der kompakten Masse durchweg einen panischen Zug - es sei, daß sie der Kriegsbegeisterung, dem Judenhaß oder dem Selbsterhaltungstrieb Ausdruck geben." (1936a: 370, fn 12) On the contrary, the idea of the proletarian mass is embedded in the moment, in which the mass is disintegrated by its action. In action, it ceases to be a mass, and it becomes a group of individual actors as opposed to a mass of reactors: "Sie hört auf unter der Herrschaft bloße Reaktionen zu stehen; sie geht zur Aktion über." (1936a: 370) In the class struggle, this means that the 'undialectical' relation between the mass and the individual is eliminated *(abgeschafft),* and also the relation between the leader *(Führer)* and the mass is described as reversing itself in the disintegrated mass. The action here is not only understood as following the leader, but the leader is also drawn towards the mass 'in order to be one of the hundred thousand' (1936a: 370)[79]. This leaves the authoritarian relationship between the leader and the mass rather as a characteristic to the petty bourgeois mass.

The further difference in formation of mass is described in the variant of this footnote; the difference emerges when the proletarian mass is seen as capable of forming itself, and when it is not formed through external impulses (GS VII.2: 668). In this sense, it is not seen as uncritically affected to the political propaganda or demagogue as it first might seem. In the examples of the 1920's Russian constructivist cinema, which intended to support and show the meaning of the revolutionary mass, the difference between fascist and Russian avant-garde films also becomes visible, as the fascist films basically show the mass as a collective crowd without a will of its own[80].

In the later part of the *Kunstwerk* Benjamin returns to the topic of the mass by discussing the way in which cinematic audience reacts in front of the screen. The technical reproduction transforms the relationship between the mass and art, and it becomes more receptive towards the new in cinema than it is towards painting (1935a: 459). Benjamin ponders the question of how it was that the mass is able to receive even the newest cinematic phenomenon, whereas it is still so regressive with regard, for example, Picasso's work or Surrealism (1935a: 459). One simple reason is already explicit, the compact mass seems receptive to entertaining and cinema, when it reduces the social issues.

The ambiguity of the concept of the mass has, as Benjamin notes, caused problems in understanding the heterogeneity of the German proletariat. It is obvious that the Nazi propaganda and film occupied the idea of the mass in the compact sense[81]. Through capitalist control, connected to the fact that filmmaking became increasingly expensive, Benjamin sees film as losing the revolutionary potential that it still had in the first avant-garde and many silent films. The mass, which in Benjamin's dictum is the object of fascist aestheticization of politics, is the ideologized mass. The obvious example of this is Hitler, as he is the "only one who is looking at them, while they all look at Hitler. Waiting for Hitler is: *nationalsozialistische Massenphysiognomie*"[82].

In the cinema, also the gap between people and machinery is diminished through showing the familiar surroundings of fabrics and bureaus[83]. Benjamin refers to this, as he emphasises the way in which 'signs of the present' become visible to the optical consciousness. The signs actually include the transformation of the perception in themselves, which is the 'explosive' potentiality of the everyday experience that Benjamin raises as a topic in *Der Sürrealismus*. Often our everyday surroundings do not appear to us before we see them through medium other than our direct perception, which in this case is the cinema[84]: "Indem der Film durch Großaufnahmen aus ihrem Inventar, durch Betonung versteckter Details an den uns geläufigen Requisiten, durch Erforschung banaler Milieus unter der genialen Führung des Objektivs auf der einen Seite die Einsicht in die Zwangsläufigkeiten vermehrt, von denen unser Dasein regiert wird, kommt er auf der anderen Seite dazu, eines ungeheuren und ungeahnten Spielraums uns zu versichern. Unsere Kneipen und Großstadtstraßen, unsere Büros und möblierten Zimmer, unsere Bahnhöfe und Fabriken schienen uns hoffnungslos einzuschließen. Da kam der Film und hat diese Kerkerwelt mit dem Dynamit der Zehntelsekunden gesprengt." (1936a: 375-376, cf. 1927b: 752) For Benjamin, the cinematic representation included the 'dynamite' by introducing a new artistic space of experiment, which could be exploded in the knowledge of the present. Yet, the revolutionary moment remained only partly realised; instead of using the possibility for action, the mass reacted through collective laughter.

Around 1920's, painters also began to experiment with the idea of movement, being influenced by the cinema. For instance, Fernand Leger, who was the painter closest to the cinema, attempted to materialise the idea of time and movement, and Marcel Duchamp's *Nude descending the stairs* (1912) was one of the first attempts to describe movement through painting. Obviously, this did

not bring the collective reception closer to art, on the contrary, it seemed to create an unfamiliarity and distance to it. Benjamin referred to a phenomenon that occurred with the reproduction of the painting in the 19th century, when the public began to see paintings in Galleries and Salons. During that time, the public manifesting its own judgement would have been scandalous: *die offenkundige Manifestierung seines Urteils hätte einen Skandal gebildet.* (1935: 460). Actually, the collective audience had never before confronted art immediately and simultaneously, even in their collective reception in churches and monasteries in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. Instead, the reception had been mediated *(vielfach vermittelt)*. Now, it was suddenly in front of the various forms of the German and Russian avant-garde.

However, Benjamin did not explicitly discuss the political reason for the collective rejection of modern art after the 1930's Germany. Since 1929, Hitler had launched a campaign against modern art, in order to clear German art of the degeneration *(Entartung)*, which avant-garde art, such as Cubism and German Expressionism, represented to him. All the new movements that searched for new ways of perception and expression, especially the social and political works of George Grosz and Otto Dix, were rejected in the national Socialist policy to resurrect the value of the ancient and classic art. Hitler's attack not only concerned painting, since most of the modernist artist were Jews, but rather, the program against degeneration was attached to the wider world view against the 'contamination' of German *Volk*. This idea was effectively supported by the art-hygienic visions of Paul Schulze-Naumburg, especially in his book, *Art and Race*, from 1928. Schulze-Naumburg, who was originally an architect, presented a view that provocatively studied the congregations between modern art and insanity. On the basis of this provocation, the branches of modern art were exhibited as 'degenerated art' *(entartete Kunst)*, and Berlin Dada, November group, most of the German Expressionists and Cubists were forced into exile. There were no further possibilities for a theoretical reflection of the importance of modern art without necessarily making an ideological statement.

11. POLITICISING CULT AND RITUAL IN FILM

The cinema enabled the sharing of new experiences of modernity with a larger audience than ever before. For Benjamin, its revolutionary content was the ability to 'blow out the interior space' in which bourgeois idea of art was conserved in the 19th century. The *politicization of aesthetics*, was the call to make art available to the masses, which was one result of the politics of reproduction (1936a: 384). Through Benjamin's idea of the political and revolutionary potential included in the reproducibility of art, he stood clearly in opposition to both Adorno and Horkheimer. The leaders of the Frankfurt School were especially sceptical about the reproduction of art, which they thought would lead to the 'cultural industry' and commodification of art. The cultural industry, which roughly meant films, radio and magazines "would make up a system which is uniform as a whole and in every part". For them, this unified system was also, in a Nietzschean sense, stylised barbary[85].

The problem for Adorno, especially in discussing the cinema, was, that the film seemed impossible to approach as an autonomous artform. Instead, he saw it as dependent on its material costs, being bound with both mass culture and new technologies. This also connected it to the manipulation practised by the ruling power *(Herrschaftsmacht)*[86]. Benjamin paid attention to the differences between their interpretations of the role of the artistic reproduction, and he mentioned it briefly, for instance, in his letter to Adorno dated 9.12.1938. Discussing Adorno's essay, *Über den Fetischcharacter in der Musik und die Regression des Hörens*, he writes: "In meiner Arbeit *(Kunstwerk*/kl) versuchte ich, die positiven Momente so deutlich zu artikulieren, wie Sie es für die negativen zuweg bringen. (...) Immer mehr stellt sich mir heraus, daß die Lanzierung des Tonfilms als eine Aktion der Industrie betrachtet werden muß, welche bestimmt war, das revolutionäre Primat des stummen Films, der schwer kontrollierbare und politisch gefährliche Reaktionen begünstigte, zu durchbrechen." (Br. 798-799)



British Film Institute, London.

Die Niebelungen, Fritz Lang, 1924.

The invention of sound films created a manipulative national force that became apparent in the language-monopoly of the movies[87]. In the sound film, especially in Germany, where the public was limited by the linguistic borders, Benjamin noted the occurrence of a major regression in the film medium, which was closely connected to both nationalism and fascism (cf. 1936a: 357). As Benjamin remarks further in his letter, he suggests the analysis of the sound film as a possible target for both, his own and Adorno's critique. However, after closely reading the *Kunstwerk* essay, it seems to me, that Benjamin's understanding of the political is more closely connected to the issues of ritual and cult than to the more obvious issues of mass-culture or reproduction. Additionally, the specific duality of Benjamin's concept of the mass could be an essential part of discussing mass culture as distinguishable especially from the idea of the mass deception, presented in the *Dialectics of Enlightenment.* These are generally the issues I shall discuss using the following examples.

11.1. Cinematic Examples: Soviet Cinema

In the *Kunstwerk*[88], the difference in the cinematic perception is discussed in terms of how the mass looks itself in the face *...sieht die Masse sich selbst ins Gesicht* (1936a: 382). This forms a fascist *Massenphysiognomie,* in which the

mass is given a homogeneous face in huge sport events or in war, represented, besides the cinema, in the illustrated magazines and newspapers.

Contrarily, Sergei Einsenstein showed the mass, not in a monumental but, rather, in an architectural form (1927b: 753). Despite the mass scenes, the potential revolutionary 'face of the mass' was constructed through faces of individuals. As Benjamin notices, in the revolutionary films, the mass 'looks at itself' but still sees itself differently than immediately experienced (1936a: 382). For instance, during the *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), the potentiality of the revolutionaries becomes actualised by the consciousness of raising the revolt, and the resistance to the old rule. The important idea in the film, which effectively creates the will to act and, in Benjamin's words, leads to the destruction of collectivity, might refer to the famous 'Odessa steps' sequence, in which part of the actors, especially the woman who loses her child and is killed herself, were not only actors but also people who were in Odessa during the massacre in 1905. However, underlining both, the importance of the event and the montage technique of the film are exaggerated by Eisenstein through the extreme length of his scene.

The intention to create a 'mass identity' in the revolutionary film is not intended to happen through identification, but through the reflection between the public and the screen. This is also the moment, in which the prismatic perception, which began to emerge through the changed view towards the immediate surroundings resulting from the reproduction technique, reaches its actuality and becomes finalised (1927a: 753). In my interpretation, this temporal difference between cinematic time and the time of experience of the spectators in the changed perception, happens as a rupture, which is also the time and space for the potential political manipulation. This might be called a *break*, or in Vertovian terms, an interval between the 'film-thinking' and the thinking of the viewers.

In the discussion with the editors of the *Alternative,* Nagel criticises Benjamin's view. According to Nagel, Eisenstein produces a mass that until that point had been non-existent and which here is represented through the revolutionary strategy, state intervention and ideology[89]. As Nagel points out, the farmers were the ones who created the Russian revolution, and not the workers, as it was later claimed. The important point of view in Nagel's claim is that Eisenstein seems to reverse the idea of the mass during the time in which the 'revolutionary mass' did not exist. Although Benjamin describes the revolutionary concept of the mass through an emphasis of the singular, he claims that it makes no sense to describe only one individual. Instead, one should describe the action of the individual in its relation to others (1927b: 754-755). The role of the farmers was noted also in Benjamin's short article 1927, as the farmers were characterised as the object, actors and also the audience of the Russian films. Benjamin describes the farmers in his article as being an object of knowledge in the historical, political, technical and hygienic matters (1927a: 749).

Eisenstein does seem to produce the idea of mass action through his films, as the films are used for agitation. Still, I see here the difference between the

presentation and perception, as Benjamin remarks, that the mass sees itself differently than it experiences (1936a: 382). In the 1927 article, Benjamin also pays attention to the Russian fascination with technique, which is expressed under the slogan "industrialisation". He points out the Russian seriousness on the matter, which is not comparable to the American idea of industrialisation, which is both idealistic and ironic of it, and which is expressed especially in Chaplin's films. The irony of technical revolution is double sided, since its comic nature, is only "hanging above the void of terror" (*überm Abgrund des Grauens*, 1927b: 753; cf. 1936a: 377-378). In Russia, as Benjamin in this case obviously patronisingly remarks, the technological development was nothing comical: *ironische und skeptische Gesinnung in technischen Dingen kann der neue Russe nicht fassen* (1927a: 750)[90]. The other major characteristic of the issues of absence that Benjamin recognises in Russian films, are dramas dealing with human relationships and the tragic love. This absence became so obvious because love was a major topic in pre-war German films, such as Pabst's *Lulu, Pandoras Box, The Joyless Street* or *The Blue Angel*[91].

As described in the previous chapter, Benjamin saw roughly two possibilities in constructing the mass. Either the formation of the 'compact' mass as it is transferred from the bourgeoisie idea towards fascist form, or its causing the disintegration of the mass towards individual actors (1936a: 370-371). The film, seen as the 'dynamite', visualises the everyday surroundings as a possible target for politicization as a cause for further individualization of the mass (cf. PW: 495). In these terms, the cinema, especially that of the Russian avant-garde, is an example in which the possibility to change the view from the historical towards the political mass-action, is present. It includes the change of perspective from utopian visions towards the everyday, and also includes the potential to spread political ideologies through other than utopian means: "Zur politische Bedeutung des Films. Nie wäre der Sozialismus in die Welt getreten, hätte man die Arbeiterschaft nur einfach für eine bessere Ordnung der Dinge begeistern wollen.(...) Zu keinem, wenn auch noch so utopische Zeitpunkte, wird man die Massen für eine höhere Kunst sondern immer nur für eine gewinnen, die ihnen näher ist. Und die Schwerigkeit, die besteht gerade darin, die so zu gestalten, daß man mit dem besten Gewissen behaupten könne, die sei eine höhere. Dies wird nun für fast nichts von dem gelingen, was die Avantgarde des Bürgertums propagiert." (PW: 499-500)

Through this rather long fragment from the *Passagen*, Benjamin claims that film is more capable of reaching the masses than revolutionary arguments from politicians or avant-gardian artists, such as Picasso or Surrealists, in that it signifies the final breakdown of the distance (cult) of art. The cinema comes closer to the viewer, and it primarily gains the value of *Kitsch,* in the sense that it becomes a 'use object' *(Gebrauchsgegenstand)*. Yet, what Benjamin hopes, is that the political structure of the cinema is capable to overcome the plain *Kitsch* and to reach the moment of action and revolutionary consciousness.

All in all, the Russian avant-garde films of the 1920's documented a 'new vision', or a montage and dialectics of seeing, although the concepts of dialectics, montage and constructivism varied among directors like Eisenstein,

Pudovkin, Dovzhenko, Schub and Vertov. As mentioned above, the provocation of the aesthetic subject was not only to follow the moving image, but also to see the surrounding world differently than before. This was a distinguishing factor between Russian and Hollywood-films, since the Hollywood cinema was seen as offering illusions. The change of perception, was, as Benjamin noted, clearly connected to the speed and rhythm of the modern culture, in reflection with changes of industrialised society in the beginning of the century[92].

11.2. Dziga Vertov

Vertov considered cinema as an autonomous art[93]. He saw the new cinema as directly political in post-revolutionary Russia, as he also pursued to attain the 'film-truth' as a method of informing people of the major events taking place in Soviet Union. He did this through travelling on the *Agit-Train*, and among the issues that he documented was the film on Lenin's death. His method of 'film-eye' was a directorial method, which penetrated beneath the surface of external reality in order to show 'life-as-it-is' on the screen.

Perhaps the clearest example of the constructivist cinema is Vertov's *Man with the movie camera*. The film is based on a constructivist concept called "art of fact". It is a non-fiction film, and in itself is also an experiment in the cinematic communication of visible events, which are executed without inter titles, script, theatre or actors. Vertov believed that the camera, through its constructivist conception, should not disturb the natural course of events during shooting, and he advised the 'kinoks' (film enthusiasts) to regard the 'life-facts' as they were. The filming of the 'life-facts' would construct the basic material for montage and through this, creation of the 'film-facts'. The facts were then conceived of as primarily independent units that could be structurally changed through the process of editing. In the constructivist tradition, the film served a dual purpose; to assist the technological revolution on the one hand, and on the other hand to take part in the transformation of social circumstances by replacing the bourgeois mentality with socialist consciousness. The most clearly articulated definition of constructivism was the *Realist manifesto* (1922), by the brothers Naum Gabo and Antonin Pevsner which says, that: "art is the realisation of our spatial perception of the world, (...) and an artist constructs his work as engineer builds his bridges and the mathematician establishes his formulas"[94].

Vertov's projects can be seen as an example that outlines Benjamin's inspiration with regard to the new perspective and perception of the immediate surroundings, which simultaneously destroys the space of contemplation through the constructivist method. For the new cinematic vision, Vertov presents the material that is transformed through the 'montage of seeing' or 'concentrated seeing'. This unconventional perception is obviously connected to the general changes of perception as a result of the new technological media of that time. In this sense, the idea of montage is an example of gathering the moments of the 'present time' that contains many layers and events under one disguise.

However, if we follow Deleuze's interpretation here, the montage was not discovered by Soviet directors, but rather, was already common before the actual film, since it precedes the filming and the choice of material. The montage enters into the filming, in the intervals occupying with the camera-eye, and it comes after the filming, in the editing-room and in the audience, who compare life and film[95]. This implies, that the presentation, as immediate as it intends to be, remains restricted by the choice of the technique.

Vertov brings the events from the street to directly in front of the eyes of the audience. This corresponds to the radicality that Benjamin considers to emerge in the new, and here in the avant-gardian idea of art; to overcome the auratic distance of the motives and artistic presentations (1935a: 440). However, in the *ciné-eye,* Vertov aims at attaining the system of universalisation itself. He defines the *ciné-eye* as being able to liberate human perception from the confines of time and space, and from normal causation. It is not a human and imperfect eye, but an improved one, which can see long distances, or slow or fast motion, as everything is dependent on variation and interaction. The *ciné-eye* is the eye of the matter, and it is not subjected to time, and as such, it is supposed to reveal a 'deeper level' of truth[96].

Deleuze raises the importance of Vertov's idea of the *temporal interval,* as, for Vertov, the important aspect of the cinema is to restore the intervals to matter. The originality of the Vertovian theory of the interval is that it no longer marks a gap which is carved out, a distancing space between two images, but, on the contrary, marks a correlation between two distant images from the point of a human perception. For Vertov, this describes Soviet revolutionary consciousness, the 'communist deciphering of reality'. The interval is no longer the aspect that separates a reaction from the action experienced, but the aspect that will find the appropriate reaction in some other point, however distant it is[97]. This implies that Vertov's concept not only crosses Benjamin's speculations on time and image, but surpasses them in the terms of an interval. Here, Vertov's interval corresponds the idea of the *Jetztzeit,* which includes the seed of the present that might become a cause for reaction in the future.

Although the ideas of film, truth and the life 'as it is' seem to be opposed to Benjamin's idea of the truth in history in the 1940 Theses, the link to Vertov's ideas becomes more obvious if we approach the idea of truth in Benjamin's dissertation (1919). The relation becomes obvious, if we consider the 'truth' as appearing in a specific film, and only during the specific time of its duration. This means approaching the truth in the temporal/spatial conditions that combine both aspects, namely, that of a work of art, and the truth of the substance it intends to represent *(Darstellen).* In this sense, the method of representation becomes crucial, and the constructivist method and the montage seemed to be an obvious link to unfold the methods of Benjamin's own work. These constructivist ideas are also included in Benjamin's method of *Das Passagen-Werk*[98]. How a perceiver puts these pieces of history together, is dependent upon the current context and situation. For instance, the principle through which Meyerhold's theatre shifts scenes and acts, changes their order and breaks them into shorter episodes, for instance, by increasing the tempo, is also included in

Vertov's *Man with the movie camera*. The constructivist structure is consciously non-sequential, which reflects the essence of the urban environment and the dynamism of the technological age. This affects Benjamin's image of film in general, as he finds the fascination of the parallel between its temporal rhythm as a reflection of modern and urban city-life.

Benjamin describes Vertov's films as following: "In Bruchteilen von Sekunden folgen einander Bilder aus Arbeitsstätten (...) und aus Genußstätten des Kapitals (...). Gesellschaftsfilmen der letzten Jahre hat man einelne, winzige Ausschnitte (oft nur Details einer kosenden Hand oder tanzende Füße, ein Stück Frisur oder einen Streifen Hals mit Kollier) entnommen und so montiert, daß ununterbrochen sie zwischen Bilder fronender Proletarier sich Schieben." (1927a: 749) Although Benjamin criticises Vertov for not further developing the topic of montage as a contradiction to and illustration of city life, he sees its significance as the attempt to construct a film by absorbing scenes of life without the huge machinery of decoration and actors. This absence of the actors as contrasting cinema in the Hollywood-sense was also the idea behind Eisenstein's mass scenes.

In broader terms the principles show the distinction that Benjamin makes between the additional and constructive writing of history in his *Theses*, in which his critique not only concerns the principle, but also the method of universalism. He points out that no universalist conception of history can be 'theoretical enough', because its method is only additive (GS 1.3: 1251; 1940: XVII). The approach in which history is constructed through monadic moments and their acknowledgement in the present, is Benjamin's alternative to cumulative universal history. In the 'constructive approach' the past is confronted in a way that destroys the pre-arrangement of events. This means that there is no history less valuable than any other. Marginal or forgotten events are possibly 'salvaged' or liberated from their marginal positioning, and this approach implies the reinterpretation of any canonised writings of histories.

Following the idea of constructivist film, the constructivist idea of historiography deals with various facts, quotes, documents, pieces and artefacts as independent units. The historical story can be told depending on the arrangement (*Darstellung*) of these pieces (cf. 1940: XVII). From the point of the human eye, montage is a construction, whereas from the other viewpoint, it ceases to be one[99]. According to Vertov, montage carries perception to the things, and puts perception in the matter, so that any point whatsoever in space itself perceives all of the points on which it acts, or which act on it. This is his idea of objectivity, "to see without boundaries or distances"[100].

The outcome of Vertov's art was as depressing as the final chapter of the Russian avant-garde. Firstly it appears as if the movies were too difficult for the viewers. This was one of the main reasons, Vertov failed to produce his films as he wished, from the point of immediate view to the 'reality'. However, his 'reality' was not identical to the 'reality' of social realism. Secondly, his film *Three songs about Lenin*, was released in 1934 in Moscow and it was a success in the USA. But it never was taken well in Soviet Union, as Stalin was dissatisfied with the film. Also *The man with the movie camera* was praised with official criti-

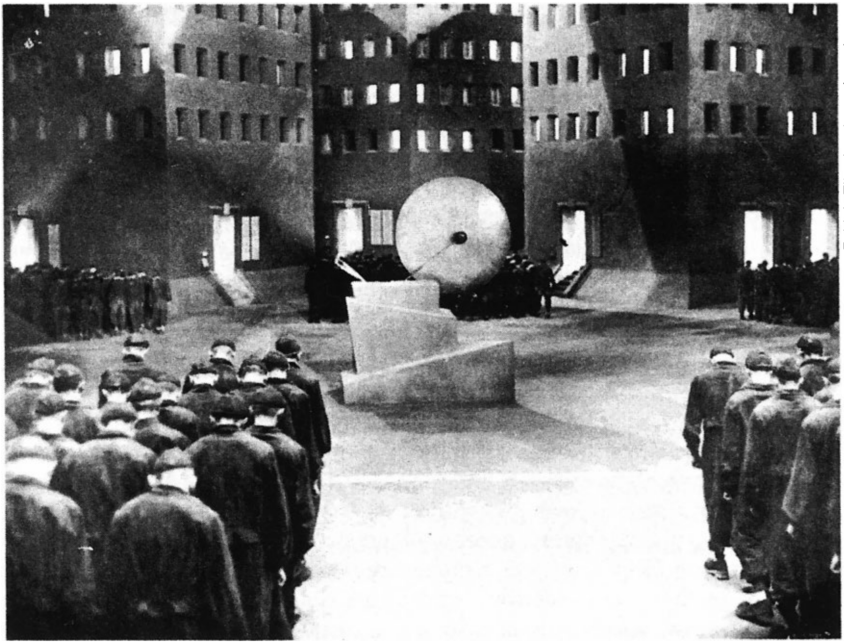
ques, although among the political leaders it was taken as too eccentric, and his films disappeared from the official screen. The story might also be told from the point of view of the break with the previous, and the radical detachment of the mythology and eternal values of art, which Vertov clearly represented, as being too radical for its time. The detachment of the continuity of tradition leaves the piece of art as standing alone, in that the gap between it and the perceiver's means of approaching art seems to be too big to overcome. In itself, the absence of any mass in Vertov's film is a striking prove of its presence, although it is not further commented in the film. That creates one obvious difference from the German films.

11.2. Fritz Lang and Metropolis

A contemporary of Vertov's *Movie camera* was Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*[101]. It was also a silent movie, made in 1926 and released in 1927. In general, *Metropolis* was considered to be the most important science-fiction film since the first one, *A trip to the Moon* (1902) by George Méliès. *Metropolis* foreshadowed the development of the science-fiction film, particularly in its vision of the futuristic upper city. The use of tele-screens for spying and communication and the design of Dr. Rotwang's laboratory filled with scientific apparatus, were later used as models in scientific-futuristic or horror films like *Frankenstein*.

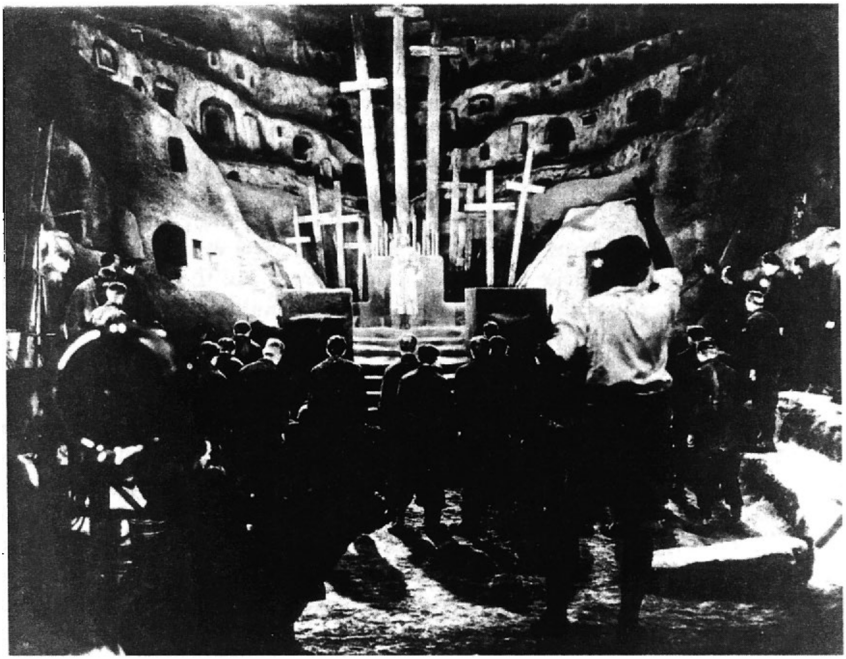
In contrast to Vertov's projects of documenting the immediate present, *Metropolis* is a futuristic and technological fantasy. It reflects modern industrialisation and the resulting class difference through a chronological narrative. However, in Lang's film, the bourgeoisie was not absent like it was in Vertov's *Movie camera*, but was clearly represented in the film itself. *Metropolis* emphasises a skilful visual construction, which, however, leaves the spectator passive. This shapes an interesting contradiction to Vertov's visual show, in which the spectator's role is essential in constructing the connections between the discontinuous elements of the film-montage. For my concern, the role of the viewer also makes Vertov's film an example of the Image-space, in this case actualised in film, since the experience of the Image-space might mean, if Benjamin's terms of the art critique are taken in concern, an act of 'completing' the film. The film cannot be viewed only passively, through an identifying approach, but it should be viewed through a conscious process of identification and alienation process, which creates the possibility for the critique, as well as it intensifies the experience of the spectator's own present through the 'familiar surroundings' showed in the film.

The narrative of *Metropolis* proceeds in the form of traditional fiction, yet, as mentioned, the emphasis on the visual makes it comparable to Vertov. *Metropolis* depicts a socially engineered world of the future, in which the rich and intelligent live on the earth's surface with their aeroplanes, trams and skyscrapers. The workers make the society run live beneath the surface in a drab, in a utilitarian city. The hero of *Metropolis* is Freder, who rebels against his father, who runs the city. Freder meets a proletarian girl Maria, who



British Film Institute, London.

Metropolis, Fritz Lang 1927.



British Film Institute, London.

appears as being a version of the Virgin Mary and the Christ; she appears simultaneously as hero and anti-hero. Emphasising her heroism, Lang shows the images in the cultic way, as for instance, with candles and Christian symbols of the crusifix. The hero wears a white gown as the symbol of spirituality, marking a clear distinction from the grey mass of the workers. Maria is understood here as a kind of Christian-Democrat-Humanist, who formulates films rather naïve political arguments: "The heart must mediate between the head and hands"[102]. The father, who represents the authority in and control over the city, hires an evil scientist, Rotwang, to manufacture a robot who looks like Maria in order to incite the workers to riot, which would eventually lead the *Metropolis* back to the father's power, and destroy the emergence of proletarian consciousness. The riot that is caused by the Maria, who is now a malicious robot, almost destroys the underground city. In the happy ending, the real Maria appears and completes her task of salvation.

The rituality of the film, both in its narrative as well as in its images, is obvious, also in the ways in which it follows eschatological logic. In Metropolis, 'the people' construct a compact and formable mass, which is externally homogenised through the worker's grey uniforms. The human patterns are presented analogously to the machinery, and they function in correspondence to the fabric they work in. This illustrates a difference between the German and Russian collectives in these films; Vertov's proletarian vision shows the masses rather implicitly, as the cameraman actually walks through the crowd with a hidden camera. The Eisensteinian mass of *Potemkin* is consciously provoked and forced to action, which destroys the Tsarist rule. In Lang's *Metropolis,* the passive and formable role of the mass is explicit. Using Benjamin's vocabulary, Lang's workers represent the compact mass, which does not create the idea of the revolutionary working class from the mass itself. The authority is given from outside, firstly, as a somewhat unfortunate riot blindly follows the wrong leader, and secondly, as Freder takes hold of the city, mediating as a 'good' ruler. The final image is the most explicit in its cultic and traditional thematic, as the holy triangle, the father, the son and the servant unite, and the Maria is left out of the picture. However, Lang's original purpose was to concentrate on class differences. Its critique of capitalism is obvious, but the political message remains hidden, and although the visual representation in the film is very effective and skilful, the political message almost becomes reversed.

As it turned out, *Metropolis* became one of Hitler's favourite films. His another favourite was Lang's *Die Niebelungen* (1924), which was based on the same epic medieval poem that inspired the ring of the Niebelungs, the four-opera cycle that became famous through Richard Wagner. Hitler especially identified himself with the story of Siegfried, as he had identified with the protagonist of Wagner's opera *Rienzi,* which he had seen in his home town of Linz ten years earlier. *Die Niebelungen* began the series of so called national movies, that produced an essential part of the German myth, which became, according to Kracauer, defined as a national document[103]. The basic idea of the national document was roughly, that the mistakes made in any sphere of life had to be

reconciled in the last destiny, the well known Christian idea and largely misused pattern of ethics.

Lang created geometrical and architectural patterns; row upon row of black clad workers in box shaped elevators. His films could also be viewed as an example of German Expressionism, as they developed diagonals and counter-diagonals, pyramidal or triangular figures that agglomerated bodies, crowds, the collision of the masses, a whole paving of the frame, "which takes on a form like the black and white squares of a chess-board"[104]. Yet, the difference to Expressionism was the way in which Lang's machines and the patterns of the workers who serviced the machines, was as rhythmic as the rhythm of the working day, which was pictured as totally geometrical.

Deleuze describes Lang works as extending lines and points of accumulation, which is only indirectly transferred into metrical relationships, and if the human body enters into these geometrical groupings it is not because it tends to transfer the human into a mechanical factor, but rather because the difference between mechanical and human has already dissolved[105]. The feature that in this sense unfortunately becomes interpreted as the most 'fascist' in terms of *aestheticizing politics*, is Lang's portrayal of human beings illustrated either as a 'mass of sheep', or a group of wild rioters who must be controlled. The mass is shown as powerless without a leader, easily manipulative and unable to take care of itself. After Hitler seized the control of the government, he invited Lang (who was a Leftist and half Jewish and no doubt most of his topics became widely misused) to make films for Nazis, whereafter Lang fled the country[106].

12. THE NAZI MYTH AND AESTHETICS

The topic of the absolute authority was seen as emerging in the national movies, in which the German sense of architecture, the rhythm of cutting and movement found a new use in the skilful films of Leni Riefenstahl. This created an effective contradiction to German expressionist cinema, in which, for instance, the films of G.W. Pabst, W.J.T. Murnau and Ernö Metzner, were characterised by feelings of chaos, destruction and obsession. Whereas Lang's films were still struggling between Leftist ideology and its reverse interpretation, the visual issues were fully developed by Riefenstahl as an ideological weapon, although they were also filled with aesthetic beauty and clarity. The most well-known example is the architectural configuration of the documentary of Nazi Party Convention at Nürnberg, *Der Triumph des Willens* (1935).

The film is a descendant of *Metropolis,* as the integration of musical motifs, the control of the camera angle and the incorporation of mythical elements all aim at presenting the *Führer* as a combination of the Pagan God of strength and the charismatic saviour which are present in Lang's character of Maria. *Der Triumph des Willens* also has similarities to the scenes of Lang's *Niebelungen,* that are presented, for instance, through ornaments and ornamental setting of the people in the mass meetings. The form is emphasised through the strict lines, strictly modelled after the chaotic expressionist images, and the patterns made out of people also include elements inspired by Lang's films. The fascism of the ornament is seen to form over any individuality or humanity[107]. But even deeper than this lie the cult figures as potential subjects of redemption, including implicit points of reference to the heroes of ancient Greece.

In her earlier film *Das blaue Licht* (1932), Riefenstahl uses the motives of cult and myth more explicitly, a fact that can be seen through her description of nature, as she uses the light as reflecting its miraculous side. The film takes place in a mountain, which is the mystical place where Junta (the actress is Riefenstahl herself) lives. She is thought to be a witch because she has the abili-



British Fi m Institute, London.

Das Blaue Licht, Leni Riefenstahl, 1934.

ty to cope safely with the mysterious light that is reflected above the mountains. The spirit of admiring nature and the powerful forces of nature are evident in the film, as the saints in the rock signify religious rituals, whereas the people live under the constant force of and in the fear of nature. In the end of the film, after the phenomenon of light has disappeared, the mystical power of blue crystals vanish. The *Schein* is gone, but the eternal legend remains.

In thinking of the ideas of landscape and their symbolism, especially in fascist aesthetics, the unique and auratic charisma of nature signifies an unattainable, although implicitly present idea of a unified nation[108]. Nature remains at an 'auratic' distance, in that it is essentially a metaphor. The attainment of the unified and auratic nation creates a monumentaneous cult or ritual, which is strengthened by and manifested in military forces, historical days of celebration, the cult of heroes and the memorial dates of the victims of wars as famous and fortunate.

In *Der Triumph des Willens* (1935), Riefenstahl uses the cinematic technology in creating a coherent space, although no longer from a human perspective. The perspective is in the unified nation, however, it is not symbolised by experience of the nature as in *Das blaue Licht*, but through a compact mass of people. Benjamin refers to this perspective *(Vogelperspektive)* in discussing technological space, in which the masses are simultaneously expressed and created through this cinematic vision (cf. 1936a: 382; 1939c: 506). In its true form,



Der Triumph des Willens, Leni Riefenstahl, 1935.

the mass is looking at its own face, which is a homogenised face of the German people. The auratic distance is created in order to characterise the charisma of political or religious leaders, and although they seem to be close to the nation, the distance is impossible to bridge. One example of the manipulation and artificial creation of charisma is expressed through the document of the Nürnberg Convention, as the repeated images of cultic movements and rituals are the worshipping of the leader. Here, Hitler is identified with Germany and Germany identified with Hitler; *Die Partei ist Hitler, Hitler ist aber Deutschland wie Deutschland Hitler ist* are the words which express some of the ecstatic moments of the party convention.

As it is done above, the differences between the Eisensteinian, Langian and Riefenstahlian mass could be deliberated in the context of cult and ritual in films, the same way in which the mass is described through the cinematic view. Here, it also effectively visualises one way of interpreting Benjamin's conception of the *aestheticization of politics*. As Benjamin puts it, the heightened presence of mind of this collective subject is not self-consciousness (individual or class consciousness). In contradistinction to the traditional viewer who becomes absorbed by art, the distracted mass absorbs (*versenkt in sich*) the work of art. For example, Gasché interprets the idea of a (compact) mass as

being absorbed in the film in a way in which the state of mind of the mass is characterised by absentmindedness, habitual models of thinking, and unfocused, incidental relation to its surroundings[109]. This is the danger of absentmindedness, which is a contradictory term to Benjamin's idea of present-mindness in terms of the political presence (*Geistesgegenwart*, cf. GS I: 1235-1237). Here, the ability to intuitively 'foresee the present' would have been needed, in terms of the ability to decipher the meaning of events that were already happening 'in front' of the people. The moment of politicisation, which Benjamin emphasised in the Theses as the possibility for the 'real historical materialist' to take a lead in historical events, would have been necessary in order to provoke the mass to action.

From the historical perspective, this moment in which the mass 'looked at itself' in the Nürnberg party convention was also one explicit example of the constellation of dangers (*Gefahrenkonstellation*, PW: 586-587; GS 1.3: 1242) of this historical situation. The possibility of establishing a rupture in the continuity of the historical and political power would have been embedded in the realisation of the 'danger' in the history and its course. Yet, in order to be effective, the moment in which the constellation of the tradition was to be transferred to the intellectual or political 'followers', explicitely the Nazis, the political subject should have recognised the dangers of the cotinuity. As Nancy notes[110], the Nazi myth is definable as an identification mechanism, and as the fascist ideology which became bound up in the construction of the myth. As opposed to historicism or a continuous history as a myth, Benjamin presented his concept of history in his Theses, as something that would have not presented the situation as an object of identification but as a destruction. The purpose was also to deny both the 'truth' of history (GS I: 1237) and a continuum of power in the form in which it was presented during his historical context. 'Truth', as it was chrystallised in the moments of the Nürnberg party convention was clearly presented to the German audience in the mid 1930's.

Benjamin further developed his ideas on fascist aesthetics through discussing the work of Andre Gide in his review of Thierre Maulnier's *Mythes socialistes* (1936). Here, the emphasis was shifted from technology towards the idea of history[111]. After reading the *Kunstwerk* essay by pointing out the importance of the concept of mass and the idea of aesteticization, *Pariser Brief* seems to offer further ideas in considering the fascist aesthetics in the form in which it had developed in Benjamin's thought during the 1930's. Here, Benjamin explicitly targets Maulnier for characterising the fascist aesthetics *par excellence*. The main characters of this are:

Firstly, the concept of culture, which is identified specifically as a civilisation. This is constructed through elitist theory, or as Benjamin calls it, through the position of the privileged[112]. The 'Western culture' is here identified with the ruling class, which in this context already means the Nazis. Again, identifying with this image of history, outlines the moment of the 'danger' (cf. 1940: VII). Benjamin specifically stresses the quote in which Maulnier notes that "he who does not wish to understand the progress of humankind and the human importance is an opponent of civilisation"

(Maulnier 1936: 210, Benjamin 1936c: 487). If expressed in Benjamin's terms, progress can be seen as the idea that is possible to artificially construct from the ritual elements, following the way in which these elements are combined as an ever repeating scheme of the historical canon on winning heroes.

Secondly, Benjamin pays attention to the bond between fascism and aestheticism. He notes that many pioneers of fascism in Italy, France and Germany were also pioneers of extreme artistic movements, such as Marinetti in futurist art. The fascist art is the pure propaganda, which is directed to the mass in the form of monumental art. The other characteristic factor of fascist aestheticism is technology, which he also discusses in the *Kunstwerk,* as well as in *Theorien des deutschen Faschismus* (1930)113. Pace Benjamin, fascism tends to claim an artificial separation of technique and aesthetics in a way how art is not conceived as a value in itself. Rather, it has use-value for the ideology, as Maulnier refers to it as the "unusable side of the technique" (1936: 490).

Benjamin saw that, for instance, Russian avant-garde tended rather to connect than to separate the aspects of art and technology, and the Russians saw the connection as a praxis in which technology was not to be praised as a heroistic figure, but to be used in the interest of the people, as it was the case with functionalism (1936c: 491). This also characterised the moment of the destruction of the monumental idea of technique, instead of bringing it closer to the users themselves. However, the monumentality and the propaganda, in addition to the transfer of the polytechnic towards the technocratic revaluation of the technological values, are the factors that bind fascist aesthetics to the idea of patterning the people into a mass. The main focus of this development, the idea of war, as described in the *Theorien des deutschen Faschismus*, and rhetorically described at the end of the *Kunstwerk,* was reworked in the *Pariser Brief*. For the beginning Benjamin takes Maulnier's definition of art: ...*Es ist die eigentliche Mission der Kunst, die Gegenstände und die Geschöpfe unbrauchbar zu machen* (Maulnier 86, after Benjamin, 1936c: 492) and interprets it as describing the art of war. Why is it that the aestheticization of politics becomes crystallised in war? As the mass is the material for war, as well as a creation of the monumental purposes, the final goal of aestheticized politics was to destroy both of these parts.

13. THE AESTHETICIZATION OF POLITICS

We want to glorify the war – the world's only hygiene – militarism, patriotism, the destructive act of the anarchists, the beautiful ideas for which one dies, and contempt for women, (...)We shall sing the great crowds excited by work, pleasure or rioting, the multicoloured, many-voiced tides of revolution in modern capitals[114].

The meaning of the claim of the aestheticization of politics, to which I referred fluently thus far, caused much puzzlement in terms of whether or not one takes Benjamin's claims of the fascist *aestheticization of politics* or communists *politicization of aesthetics* seriously. The filmic examples discussed above might clarify Benjamin's intention, since the fashioning-aspect, presented in the discussion of films from the 1920's, is visible in the images of the fascist militaristic parades and in Lang's workers in the fictional *Metropolis*. For Benjamin, the 'compact mass' appears the suitable material to form and to fashion. Further, Benjamin's distinction between the compact and the disintegrated mass shows its importance in the specification of the idea of fascist aestheticization, since if the mass is not suitable for formation it is supposed to include a potentiality to take action in politicising aesthetics.

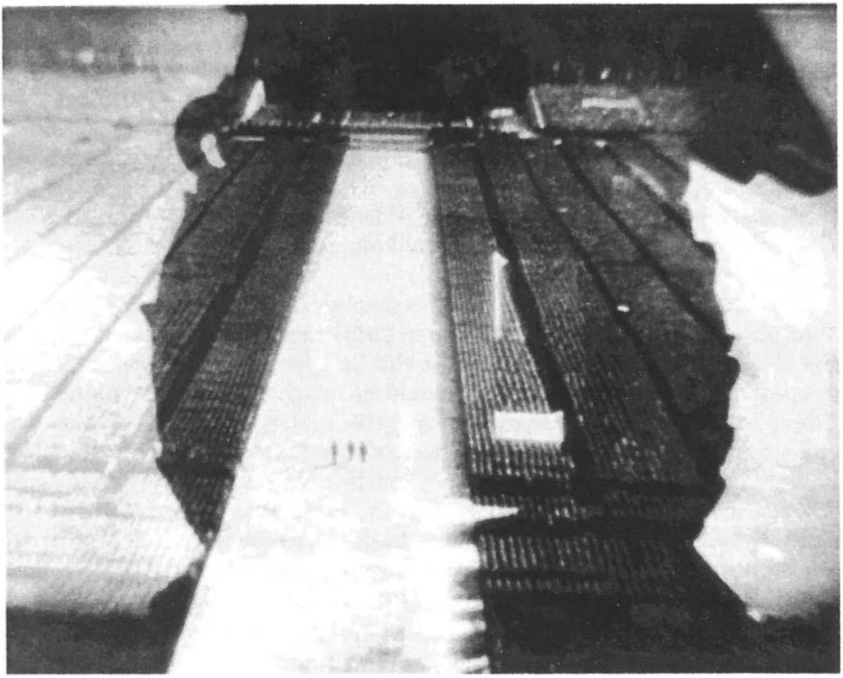
According to Jean-François Lyotard's view, the aesthetic is and always has been political in the Western tradition, in the sense, that all politics has since Plato obeyed the politics of fashioning[115]. "It is the question of fashioning and refashioning the city, to make it appropriate to a metaphysical paradigm that would be that of the good arrangement of the *logos*, the *thumos* and the *eputhimetikon*, so that they will be accurately mirrored in the coy constituted by the well-fashioned city"[116]. For Lyotard, this idea of having to fashion the human community is fundamentally aesthetic. This is also what Jean-Luc Nancy presupposes in his discussion of the idle community *(La coummunauté desoeuvrée)*. A common example of an artificially fashioned community is the military, which represents something similar to a harmonic and aesthetic community.

However, the modern relation between politics and aesthetics is no longer harmonic, conversely, it is the rule of conflict, or rather, as Lyotard uses the concept, it is the relation described through Kantian *sublime*. Especially since the era of the Enlightenment, human communities are seen as shaped by invisible factors. However, according to Benjamin, communities are scattered in the era of the modernity, because they have lost the basis of common and sharable experiences (1936b). It means that the primacy of aesthetics in the tradition, which is understood in the sense of fashioning of politics, seems to be destroyed in the modern era. For Lyotard, politics begin to combine heterogeneous discursive genres, and become invested in territories and in relation to objects that were formerly seen as outside of its sphere. In this sense, the politics and aesthetics seem to exist in close proximity, whether the connection is understood through the principle of fashioning or by following the idea of sublime aesthetics. However, for Lyotard the aesthetics did not completely disappear from politics in the sense of fashioning (*plattein*), the final phase of which was Nazism. Also in Lyotard's view, this can be seen as the complete *aestheticization of politics*[117].

As for Lyotard, aestheticization refers to the idea of *plattein*, whereas for Benjamin, it is only one side of it. The city architecture has the double bond, in which the fine order of plattein that is practised both to the city as well as towards its citizens, might transform the 'citizens' into a compact mass. In the primarily unpublished version of the last chapter of *Kunstwerk*, which differs from the style and slightly from the content from the published third version, Benjamin states that the meaningful changes in aesthetics and politics are connected to large mass movements. Throughout his whole essay it is implicit that Benjamin saw the political potentiality for revolution as expressed in the revolutionary art, especially in the 1920's photography and film, and also as intending to raise a collective consciousness of social events. The goal of the aestheticization of politics was, plainly expressed, the state of war: "Alle Bemühungen um die Ästhetisierung der Politik gipfeln in einem Punkt. Dieser eine Punkt ist der Krieg." (1936a: 382) Here, Benjamin interprets the aestheticization as the political form of *l'art pour l'art*, since fascist politics practised *war for war's sake*, implying the alienation from humanity and the aesthetic satisfaction of self-destruction.

In the *Theorien des deutschen Faschismus*, Benjamin again discusses the idea of technological and historical *progress*, which from his point of view, blinded German Left. In the Theses he further describes the problems of historical progress as leading the politicians to the illusion of the pre-determinate political course (cf. 1940: X-XIII). Understanding progress as limitless, automatic and deterministic is compared to theological and religious view on eternal and absolute concepts of time, which, as they are expressed in the *Kunstwerk*, are especially ideologicized among fascist aesthetics.

The conceptualised ideas of eternity and creativity, outlined in the beginning of the *Kunstwerk*, are also worth repeating in this context. Although Benjamin intended to re-conceptualise creativity and genius, the eternal value and secrecy of art (*Schöpfertum und Genialität, Ewigkeitswert und Geheimnis*



Der Triumph des Willens, Leni Riefenstahl, 1935.

1936a: 350), his intention was to introduce a theory of art, that would visualise the 'uncontrolled', fascists usage of these concepts. The National Socialist propaganda turned towards ancient Greece and Rome in the idealisation of ancient aesthetic values and human race, and transformed the ideas into an eternal existence of the German nation (*Das Dritte Reich rechnet nach Jahrtausenden,* 1936c: 488-489). In 1930, Benjamin observed that among Germans, there still existed a "boyish rapture that leads to a cult, to an apotheosis of war" (1930: 240-241). War, the 'eternal war', was thought to be the highest manifestation of the German nation, and in the background of the 'eternal' lied the idea of cultic war. For Benjamin, the problem was that the authors of the book[118] took the loosing of the war more seriously than the war itself, since it also implied the loss of the idea of cultic war; *Er sagt: der Sieger behält den Krieg, dem Geschlagenen kommt er abhanden* (1930: 242). Not even the history of World War I seemed to cause a disruption in the persistent wish for the cultic continuity. For Benjamin "they continued to celebrate the cult of war by wanting to maintain the state of war regardless of the fact that there was no longer any real enemy" (1930: 243).

As the cult of war was hidden behind the disguise of the continuity of 'eternal' and ancient ideas, it also became expressed through the progressive view of mankind. The idealistic attempt was to turn the imperfection into fulfilment, or as Benjamin remarked in his review, to shift historically contingent idea of

Germany towards an 'eternal Germany' (1930: 245). One suggestion of escaping from this continuity lead to 'organised pessimism' as he argued in *Der Sürrealimus*, and to the mistrust of moralism in politics. This mistrust was supposed to be focused on the idea of progress as well as on the universal mistrust of literature, freedom and European humanity: "Und das bedeutet: Pessimismus auf der ganzen Linie. Jawohl und durchaus. Mißtrauen in das Geschick der Literatur, Mißtrauen in das Geschick der Freiheit, Mißtrauen in das Geschick der europäischen Menschheit (...). Und unbegrenztes Vertrauen allein in I.G. Farben und die friedliche Vervollkommnung der Luftwaffe. Aber was nun, was dann?" (1929: 308)

As Michael Löwy notes, Benjamin, although being as pessimistic as one could possibly be towards the situation in the Weimar republic, could not imagine the amount of destruction that the air forces were to inflict of the European cities and population. Nor could he imagine that the mentioned *I.G. Farben*, became famous for manufacturing the Zyklon B. Gas that was used to facilitate the genocide[119]. Benjamin witnessed the war continuously going on, although he did not yet see its concrete practice. Moreover, for him, it meant the practice of cult and ritual that would have been as dangerous as any practise of war, because the ideas were to be transferred to the fascist concept of culture, art and politics. The mythical stance of history appeared as the *Ausnahmezustand,* the fascist 'political theology' as 'continuing of religion by other means', was interpreted in Benjamin's later critique as forming the "state of exception that has become a rule" (1940: VIII).

The potential counter-movement, the *politicization of aesthetics* that Benjamin expected from Communists, intended to emphasise the significance of the power included in arts. The consciousness of the mass, which following Benjamin's idea would have been constructed through aesthetic means, would have led to the general revolutionary action, and not to destruction in war. In the combination of the earlier discussed elements, the power of art appeared in a seed that awaited actualisation throughout the disrupted era. Benjamin's belief in the power of art is expressed in the unpublished fragment of the last chapter, in which Benjamin notes that art is not only to be thought of in terms of the matter of a single Dasein and its conflict, but should also be thought of in the more intense context of the social level (GS VII.2: 669). At this point, the art and artists seemed to be more important and powerful actors in social change than politics and politicians. The *politicization of aesthetics* implied action through and within arts.

However, in the published version of the *Kunstwerk,* this notion seemed only fragmentary, and Benjamin's political connections did not become here apparent enough. Rather, the notion of the *politicization of aesthetics* is, from my point of view, more meaningful in understanding the importance that Benjamin gave to the concept, role and influence of avant-garde and proletarian art during his contemporaneous time. The new spaces that he saw as emerging for aesthetic action, were, if the interpretation on Benjamin were pushed a little bit further, included in the new experimental spaces *(Spielraume),* realised by arts.

14. THE AESTHETICO-POLITICAL *SPIELRAUM* AND TIME

I finished the chapter on *The Conceptual Question*, with the notion that Benjamin had began to search for other definitions of aura than those characterised by cultic distance and rituality. The new idea was that the cultic character of aura would become *transparent* after its decay by reproduction. Benjamin intended to work more on the idea of this aura, after it would have been 'cleaned' from its cultic content. The discussion would have been elaborated from the places in the *Kunstwerk,* in which Benjamin discussed the new temporal and spatial spaces of artistic experiment (*Spielraum*, GS VII.2. 753). They could also be read as the spaces, in which the further *politicization of aesthetics* occurs, as politics is now interpreted through its temporalization.

In claiming the decay of aura, Benjamin criticises Hegelian aesthetics and, in a wider context criticises the aesthetics of German idealism, as for him it represents the production of the origins of the bourgeois idea of aesthetics (cf. VII.2: 667)[120]. Benjamin proclaims that the illusion *(der schöne Schein)* of the auratic reality was already fulfilled in Goethe's idea of creativity, and he repeats the idea of beauty from *Goethe's Wahlverwandtschaften* here: " 'Weder die Hülle noch der verhüllte Gegenstand ist das Schöne, sondern dies ist der Gegenstand *in* seine Hülle' – das ist die Quintessenz der goetheschen wie der antiken Kunstanschauung." (1936a: 368, cf. 1922: 195) The idea of the cover, or envelope *(Hülle),* is identical to the aura, in which the beautiful becomes illuminated[121]. Although the beauty of the work of art is understood being 'behind' this cover, it is still reflected in it.

When the illumination scatters, or when it is distracted as in the era of reproducibility, the cover loses the aspect of beauty. However, it might also bring the inner truth content, in that it is bound with beauty, more visible in the perception of the single work of art. This is the positive moment of reproducibility, as, for Benjamin, it includes the possibility of penetrating deeper into the

'essence' of the work, which is now conceived of in its infiniteness and transformability. Following Benjamin's Goethe-essay further, the beauty in art is included in the secrecy *(Geheimnis)* of the work, but not in its presentation *(Erscheinung)*. The beauty also includes the possibility to be recovered in the moment of critique (cf. 1922: 196). In the moment at which the illusion that the aura represents is becoming transparent, the work might also appear differently in its perception.

Here, Benjamin lands in the interpretation between the Platonic idea of art as illumination and the Heidegger's idea of beauty, that is connected to the being and truth *(Sein and Wahrheit)*[122]. In the *Kunstwerk*, Benjamin plays with the double meaning of illumination, as it is formed from the illusion *(Schein)* towards presentation *(Erscheinung)*. In the Kunstwerk, Benjamin also emphasises the aesthetic polarity of the concepts of play and illumination *(Spiel und Schein)*, in which the idea of the origin as truth has already disappeared.

For Benjamin, both, the sides of play and of illumination are included in the idea of mimesis (GS VII.2: 668). The decay *(Verfall)* of the ancient idea is to be found in the mimesis itself, which is understood as the Urphänomen of all artistic creation. What the imitation does to the subject imitated occurs only in an illusory way, like in a play: "Der Nachmachende macht seine Sache scheinbar. Man kann auch sagen: er spielt die Sache. Und damit stößt man auf die Polarität, die in der Mimesis waltet. In der Mimesis schlummern, eng ineinandergefaltet wie Keimblätter, beide Seiten der Kunst: Schein und Spiel." (1936a: 368) Benjamin suggests, that the new definition of art would find a balance between these two extreme ways of interpretation; as Schiller stresses the importance of the play *(Spiel)*, Goethe stresses illumination in aesthetics (VII.2: 667). In the new era of art, what Benjamin calls reproducibility, the balance between these two ways could be found. The redefinition of art allows the work of art to be conceived of in a way in which play and illumination are brought together, and in which the art not only imitates the surrounding world, but also begins to *imitate itself* as copies are reproduced.

Here, Benjamin creates a perspective, which also reaches the understanding of art in our contemporary situation. For instance, Martin Seel remarks the importance of Benjamin's idea in overcoming the traditional aesthetics. The idea to which Benjamin's thought leads is, that here, art is not conceived of as the presentation *(Erscheinen)* of something else, such as the reality or the truth, but is *understood as the presentation of itself*. The being of the work of art is embedded in the art of presentation, and this is one starting point of thinking about art in the so called media-age or in the media-aesthetic[123]. Benjamin approaches the copies as autonomous works and potential beginnings for other traditions, which points the art history into a direction, that here might be referred to as cairologic. In addition to the transformation of the ideas of originality and authenticity, the world of art opens up like a large and unknown space for experimenting with art and reality, in larger terms, with the spiritual and the material world.

Benjamin's next step makes the ideas of play and illumination even more important. Namely, he introduces the concepts of *Schein* and *Spiel* in their rela-

tion to history, and, what else, but time: "Weder der Begriff des Scheins noch der des Spiels ist der überkommenden Ästhetik fremd; und insofern das Begriffspaar Kultwert und Austellungswert in dem erstgnannten Begriffspaar verpuppt is, sagt es nichts Neues. Das ändert sich aber mit einem Schlage, sowie diese Begriffe ihre Indifferenz gegen die Geschichte verlieren (...): Was mit der Verkümmerung des Scheins, dem Verfall der Aura in den Werken der Kunst einhergeht, ist ein ungeheurer Gewinn an Spiel-Raum. Der weiteste Spielraum hat sich im Film eröffnet." (1936a: 368-369).

The experimental space that the cinema opens is in many ways new. As noted in the quotation above, the ideas of illumination and play in the aesthetic sphere are not new. Yet, the new idea emerges when the concepts are tied to the idea of history, and through this, also to idea of the decay of aura. The importance of the reproducibility as an initiation of the new field of artistic experimentation is emphasised throughout the essay. As it would be wrong to consider the reproducibility only a technological matter, the quote also repeats the idea of the technology as a historical, and through this, a temporal phenomena. This has a major impact on theory and perception of art, which results in the widening of the gap between the traditional way of seeing, and the contemporary perception of the work of art. The cinema, as it is elementarily tied to the reproduction technique, provides the space in which the reflection of the new space of possibilities in the spheres of politics, aesthetics, art and experience occurs.

14.1. The Aura in Film

In discussing the temporality of the reproducibility, it is still meaningful to make the distinction between cinematic and photographic reproduction techniques, as well as between their specific temporal conditions. *Firstly,* in the photograph, the spatially interpreted subject/object relationship appears to be more distinctive than in the film, which is a montage of several makers and reproductions (1936a: 364). According to Benjamin, film does not exist as a work of art until it is constructed as a montage, and after it has passed the various steps of shooting and editing. This distance between making and achieving a work is clearly the most obvious temporal difference between the chemical developing of a photograph and the finalising of a film[124]. What this means is that the temporal difference is embedded primarily in the quantitative difference, and *secondly,* it is also characterised as *qualitative,* in the ways in which it includes the stages of the temporal and spatial *alienation* of individual time.

When one changes the object of the camera's focus or the camera angle, the change of the movement of camera from close to distant shots is something that Benjamin refers to as an 'optical test' that the actor must pass. Following Rudolf Arnheim, Benjamin also compares the slow motion ability of the camera to psychoanalysis, which introduces us to the unconscious impulses. This is one side of the idea of changing time from external and quantitative towards a qualitative category. The actor has the ability to master the obstacles of 'real

time', and through doing so, he or she comes to conquer the time differently than, for instance, an athlete, who is constantly trying to 'beat the clock', conquering the temporal achievements of previous athletes. As the sporting event consists of various temporalities, which are mainly quantitatively measurable, they can also be combined, but only in the frame of an experimental time[125].

As the athlete remains attached to quantitative time, the actor becomes alienated from it. The alienation-effect is created through the camera, and although the audience may feel that it identifies with the actor/s on the screen, the identification process is technologically mediated. This means that the object of identification is not the actors or events themselves, but the camera (1936a: 366). The further stage of alienation in the essay is characterised through Pirandello's theory, through which Benjamin analyses the alienated feeling of an actor him or herself: "Der Filmdarsteller, schreibt Pirandello, fühlt sich wie im Exil. Exiliert nicht nur von der Bühne sondern von seiner eigenen Person. Mit einem dunklen Unbehagen spürt er die unerklärliche Leere, die dadurch entsteht, daß sein Körper zur Ausfallserscheinung wird (...) und seine Realität, seines Lebens, seiner Stimme und der Geräusche, die er verursacht, indem er sich rührt, beraubt wird..." (1936a: 366)

In this temporal and spatial self-alienation, the actor is detached from the auratic presence, which he or she still masters on the stage. In front of the camera, the experience of the alienation of personal movements, sounds and expressions, is included in the technical impact of a reflection. Benjamin parallels this to the viewing of one's own image in the mirror. The experience of distance is the experience of distancing the body at the moment in which it is reproduced on film.

As the aura is bound with the Here and Now presence of the actor, it cannot be transferred technically, because there is no reproduced image of it (*Es gibt kein Abbild von ihm* 1936a: 366). However, it seems that the loss of aura not only happens in the reproduction, but also both the aura of the representation, and that of the object of presentation, vanish. However, if the Here and Now situation of theatre performance creates an auratic event in its uniqueness and in intertwining the aspects of actors, audience and space, the other part of the event, which is the Here and Now situation of the *audience*, must still be existent in some forms in the cinema. This implies that the *aura does not necessarily only surround the personal presence of the actor, but also the audience*. This means that in film, the experience changes through the loss of the actor's aura, towards the auratic perception and presence of the audience.

When Benjamin discusses the film and the photograph, he describes both the vision and the reflection of the subject and object in perception, as the 'last' auratic relationship. What is important in the transfer from the actors' personal aura to its reception among the audience, is that the process constructs an artificial feeling of presence and identification. This is exactly the conception of aura that is possible to misuse in fascist aesthetics, by creating mass propaganda and false identification with the unified issues that are presented on the screen, whether they pertain to nation, race or *Heimat*. On the other hand, the

revolutionary film has the potential to create a reception in the audience, which in the viewing situation creates the impulse for action.

This dualistic idea constitutes the second difference between the cinematic and photographic auras. For Benjamin, the aura in photography is in the face, in the fluent *(flüchtige)* expression in the face, or more specifically in the eyes, as they posses the ability to respond to the view of the perceiver: "Im flüchtigen Ausdruck eines Menschengeschichts winkt aus den frühen Photographien die Aura zum letzten Mal." (1936a: 360) When this 'last' aura disappears, the cult value of art shifts to its exhibition value. This moment implies the standstill of the present time, rather, than a projection towards the future as the aura will disappear 'after' this moment. On the other hand, a film is an object of countless improvements *(Verbesserungen)* from the first image onwards towards the coming times. This fact clearly distinguishes it from the eternal value of traditional art, since it does not have an aura to loose in the first place (1936a: 362). The cinema includes a temporal standstill in the still-images, and the potentiality to improve, or perhaps more accurately, to transfer the original moment. Although this ability was already included in photography as the technique of retouching, it was not so commonly used. However, the contemporary transfer from the chemical towards the digital technique has had the similar impact of 'countless improvements' in photographic images. This moves the photographic technique towards a film in the specific temporal sense, and the discussion on the fraudulence of photography rages on. The change might be seen as similar to the cinematographic transfer from quoting life in a Vertovian way, 'as it is', to the fascination with changing the world towards the cinematographically presented images[126].

In her interpretation on Benjamin, Lieselotte Wiesenthal emphasises the individual character that the presence of aura gives to any work of art[127]. This uniqueness *(Einmaligkeit)* is no longer secured through the symbolic presence of the divine, but as an objectification of the genius of artist. Wiesenthal does not, however, pay attention to the critique through which Benjamin distinguishes between the traditional 'genius' of artist and the critique of the concept. As discussed above, in both the *Kunstwerk* and *Der Sürrealismus* the idea of an artist-genius distinguishes between the political and mythical approaches to art. For my concern, the contemplation as aesthetic judgement, the Kantian *interessenloses Wohlgefallen*, which, according to Wiesenthal is also included in Benjamin's idea of aesthetic judgement *(seine Steigerung in Benjamin findet)*, is the very fact that Benjamin's aesthetic attempts to overcome in his search for the new aesthetic idea of experience.

In my interpretation, the aura does not necessarily escape the understanding the mental presence of any agent in the aesthetic perception. In this sense, the concept of aura transverses the idea of *Geistesgegenwärtigkeit* (cf. GS I.3: 1243-44; PW: 598). This connection, and the possible transformation of the moment of Here and Now towards the mental presence of a subject, makes the concept of aura more problematic than ever. All in all, in my view, the aura not only characterises the distance of the bourgeois concept of art, but it spins together all of the various parts of an artistic event, not only in the object itself, as the

'bourgeois' aura that is connected to rituality. In its form of the Here and Now, the concept enables the discussion of a creative moment, the awareness of the present and the possibility to build the approach towards the new, which is not only conceived of merely as a repetition of the old. On this point, I would agree with Samuel Weber, who notes that the decline or fall *(der Verfall)* of the aura is not something that simply befalls it from without; the aura is from the beginning marked by an element of taking leave, of departure, of separation. What is important, is that the aura never fully disappears[128].

As Benjamin recognises the possibility of non-cultic auratic art (GS VII.2: 753), it is impossible and even unnecessary to see the aura as vanishing completely. This does not mean the nostalgia for the auratic in its 'bourgeois' meaning, but it means finding the possibilities of including it in the temporal interpretation and redefinition of the work of art, even after its first rupture in the new reproduction techniques[129]. The chances for non-cultic auratic art would be found through the new temporal *Spielraum*. In this, the question of how the idea of the *Spiel* would have been thematically developed further in the *Kunstwerk,* becomes important.

The new experimental space of the cinema naturally was influential in other than only the revolutionary context, namely, in the ambiguous sphere of entertainment. Although Benjamin did not welcome the 'American Groteskfilme' with huge enthusiasm, he recognised its collective and therapeutic side in producing laughter. "Die amerikanischen Groteskfilme und die Filme Disneys bewirken eine therapeutische Sprengung des Unbewußten. Ihr Vorgänger ist der Excentrik gewesen. In den neuen Spielräumen, die durch den Film entstanden, war er als erster zu Hause: ihr Trockenbewohner. In diesem Zusammenhang hat Chaplin als historischer Figur seinen Platz." (1936a: 377-378 cf. 1927b: 753).

In the second version of the *Kunstwerk,* Benjamin included a footnote, in which he stressed the ambiguity of the comic films through their comical and on the other hand, terrible character. This ambiguity is most apparent in the reactions of children towards the figure of Mickey Mouse[130]. This figure is also an example that Benjamin raises in connection to the 'collective dream', described as an exemplary phantasmagoria of his contemporary time; as the dualistic meaning of comedy and horror is no doubt present in the early phantasmagoric shows. The other example of collective dreams, especially in the German context, are the aspects of psychotic characters, sadistic fantasy or masochistic illuminations of insanity in pre-war cinema. Without going into detail, the description suits films, like Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, Lang's *Destiny,* Murnau's *The Last Laugh*, or Pabst's films, belonging to *die neue Sachlichkeit* in film making.

Chaplin's significance for Benjamin was that he showed a figure of a protagonist in the new experimental space. The comedy of history shows the horror of the situation through the disguise of laughter, as the playful state was radically interrupted by the war. Nevertheless, the historical stage *(Schauplatz der Geschichte)* that Benjamin presented in the research on the German *Trauerspiel,* had now transformed to the historical space of experiments in and through the

cinema. The temporal possibilities that the film created out of concrete historical context, could be characterised in terms of a Kairos-moment in the Chronos of art history. These moments also implied the possibility of rethinking the role of art in society. The possibility would be to actualise the temporal and spatial varieties as including the mediation of the present culture as it is confronted with the past. Although Benjamin saw this transformation towards the detachment from bourgeois artistic values as occurring in the cinema, which actually proved to be one of the most capitalistic of the new artforms, it did not, in this sense, 'actualise its revolutionary potential' through concrete action. Rather, the re-conceptualisation of art occurred through the discovery of its specific political and temporal aspects.

14.2. The Experimental Time of the Photograph

For Eduardo Cadava, 'once upon a time' characterises history's cliché, but there is also the ritual of *once upon a time* in fairytales[131]. The ritual is repeated in the photograph as it signifies the beginning, the once upon a time of the moment, which is, paradoxically, already over when one starts to think about it. Still, it can begin a narrative[132]. For Cadava, the beginning of photography means its beginnings and childhood, however, it also means the burial place. Parallel to Cadava's reference to the famous flash from Benjamin's fifth Thesis of history, one might discover the truth in the photograph.

The parallellization between the 'flashing truth' and the flash of the camera is a skilful, yet too simple a solution. The fifth Thesis refers to a flash of consciousness and acknowledgement, not to the photographic flash, which only captures the events temporally, but does not produce anything new in the moment. In the Benjaminian moment of insight, the aspects of memory, thinking, image and the experience of the past are intertwined into a recognition of events, 'which once happened'. The moment of Kairos, understood as an insight or the moment of a right action, appears only if it is identified as such. In this temporal structure, Benjamin connects the present time, the subjectivity and the idea of cognition as components that shape both individual temporality and the individual's historical understanding. Yet, since the moment also includes the recognition of temporal and historical change, it gives an impulse for the emergence of the dialectical image, which includes the questioning of the course of time and its transformation through the confrontation between past and present moments. In my view, the confrontation, including the action of the subject, elevates the topic onto the stage upon which the past events 'come alive'. The temporal confrontation is not only a disruption in a quantitative temporal sense, but it also demands an interpretation, a reaction, or a critique of the situation. Yet, if we remain only in the sphere of the snapshot itself, it does show us, as Cadava claims, the burial place, the death of the moment that is never to return.

In the *Kunstwerk,* Benjamin writes that man withdraws himself from the photographic image. This is evident in the temporal structure of the photog-

raph; there is no photograph without this withdrawal, which, for Cadava, means that the photograph becomes a 'cemetery'[133]. Again, parallel to death I would emphasise the aspect of beginning, since the photo is also the birth of a moment in other times, which includes the emergence of the new and the unknown, especially in the moment in which it confronts the future times and future audiences. It divides the time in two. Firstly, it is the 'cemetery' of the course of events leading to the snapshot, and secondly, it means the reactualization of these events in the coming time. In this double face it has its most intensive relation to the present time.

As Benjamin's idea of history is temporally infinite, the works of art always contain the potential for critique and complementation. It is the positive potential embedded in the insight, which relates to the openness not only of the future, but also of the present. This means that the 'new' perspective in thinking about time and temporality is not only webbed in the structure of the cinema, although it more explicitly implies the possibility of improvement, but also in the photograph. This 'new temporal perspective' is the crucial factor in constructing the experimental space of possibilities of the photograph, since the temporal consciousness not only changes the vision, it also changes the experience.

Also of interest in Cadava's interpretation, is the connection to the spatial aspect, which is expressed by the question of how the photograph opens the possibility of history, which spatializes time and temporalizes space. In this arresting moment, the time is transferred through an image into something like the space of a certain interval[134], and the moments of history become re-spatialized and temporalized through the visual documentary. In order to recognise the important moments of temporalization, Benjamin constructs his view from the caesura, which is the crossing point that opens up infinite possibilities to escape from linearity. He re-spatializes time from the homogeneous path towards the future, and he signifies the cairologic space of opportunities and disruptions, characterised by individual experience. As history becomes temporalized through the turn towards politics, some of the material that causes this process is images, photographs and films, in which the interruption of the temporal course becomes materialised for the analysis.

The streets and places of Paris, which are presented, for instance, in Eugene Atget's photographs, are examples of the recording of historical spaces in *Kunstwerk*. Atget took photographs of the empty streets that were usually experienced as being full of life. When Benjamin noted the striking absence of human bodies and human faces, to him it made the streets appear as pieces of evidence. *Empty spaces* are represented as evidence of the historical processes, and Benjamin calls the scenes of Atget as 'deserted scenes of crime' (*Tatort* 1936a: 360-361). The implicit political meaning of the space was included in these photos as a moment of uneasiness (*Beunruhigung*), that they caused, as they 'stirred the viewer' who was tempted to see the place in a new way, from a new perspective. This is one reason why they are impossible to view as an object of contemplation (*Ihnen ist die freischwebende Kontemplation nicht mehr angemessen*, 1936a: 361).

When the human face disappears into the crowd, as in Atget's photography, the empty streets illustrate the transfer from the cult value to the exhibition value of art in the same way in which the transfer was described through the disappearance of the aura (1936a: 360). The transfer from 'people' towards the representation of architecture is simultaneously signifying the *transfer of modernity through the absence of the mass*. Paradoxically, it also makes the mass apparent through its absence in the image. As the contemplative perspective becomes impossible, this is comparable to the thought of the political moment as destruction of the contemplative space, which is already included in the essay on Surrealism: "Den Pessimismus organisieren heißt nämlich nichts anderes als die moralische Metapher aus der Politik herausbefördern und im Raum des politischen Handelns den hundertprozentigen Bildraum entdecken. Dieser Bildraum aber ist kontemplativ überhaupt nicht mehr auszumessen." (1929: 309) Here, the Image-space appears as it appears in the film, as a sudden alienation from contemplation, and as such, it transfers the experience towards the idea of action.

As Cadava interestingly remarks, *the state of emergency* corresponds to the photographic event[135]. Referring to Benjamin's eight Theses of history, he claims that for Benjamin, history is also to be thought of within the language of photography. However, I would prefer to say that Benjamin's idea of composing history is reminiscent of the structure of constructive film, but it also stresses how the film is understood from a different temporal perspective than the photograph. The film technique has the ability to either destroy or continue the linear narrative, as the continuity or chronology of the narrative can be reduced to the still images, moments and fragments of 'real time'. How these fragments are put together in ever changing ways, is dependent on the 'editor', who in some terms might take the place of the Benjaminian Historian.

Cadava claims that for Benjamin, nothing happens as it really happens. Like the photographic event, Benjamin interrupts the present as it occurs between the present and itself, between the moment of time and itself. Again, Cadava's notion is important and it differs from my interpretation. Namely, many of the things that are most important to Benjamin, who is a master of minimalism[136], happen exactly in the minimum amount of time possible (*Bruchteil der Sekunde*). For instance, in the snapshot both the standstill of events in the image, as well as the *standstill* of the object occur. Here, the potentiality for the *memory image*, which intensifies the course of the present into the flash, also emerges.

The *standstill* of the events, regardless of how insignificant it appears, turns the moment of the *Bruchteil der Sekunde*, into one of the most meaningful moments in Benjamin's thought. This moment, in which 'nothing happens', is the seed of the present that is possible to open in the act of knowledge. In the photographic event, the moment is frozen and the action is taken when the photographer takes the snapshot. This freezes time into a momentary constellation of the sight, and the temporality is materialised in the image. The moment will remain 'frozen' until it reaches the other observer, the perception and the mind that forms its own interpretation in the future vision. Also, the

changing postures and attitudes of the individual are made visible in any given split-second. This turns the fluent view of time into a qualitative time that is possible to approach, see, analyse or manipulate by a subject-actor. The task of the avant-garde would be to realise and further experiment with these short temporal sequences, as a detachment of the cultic or ritual basis of art and as the beginning squares of the new temporally and spatially created and perceived artworks.

FROM REPRODUCIBILITY TOWARDS THE POLITICIZATION OF ART

The changes in individual experience are immediately related to the changes in general circumstances, whether they are approached aesthetically, politically or from the urban perspective. The different art of perception that Benjamin postulates in his essay as emerging in the beginning of this century in order to reflect the new forms of art from avant-garde to cinema, also retrospectively changes the nature of a human collective as spectators (cf. 1936a: 354). However, the question of the change of perception is also methodological. This becomes obvious especially in thinking *how* to approach the transformed environment and *how* to document the new experiences not only theoretically, but in terms of connecting the ideas of the political and aesthetic experiences. As I conceive of it, one possibility is to approach the sphere of images in which the process of transformation is arrested.

The signs of the present are presented in various ways to the perceiver, which could also be illustrated through an imaginary walk through the streets. The subject confronts the immediate present through the signs of the past in the way in which they appear in her or his present vision. The *flaneur* experiences the traffic and its modern speed; looks at the buildings and their details, which represent histories of architecture, differing stages of ideas of public representation and even the contradiction between poverty and wealth; *flaneur* confronts the passers-by signified by fashion, style or non-style in which the traces of various decades merge; he flaneurs through shopping centres and city-passages that are signified by commodity and advertisement, including explicit or implicit references to the sexual preferences of the time in question[137].

The objects do not appear only as objective aesthetic perceptions, rather, they include the aspects of time and history within themselves. In my view,

these moments, the familiar as well as the unfamiliar surroundings of the everyday, were examples of issues Benjamin 'collected' into his works such as *Das Passagen-Werk, Einbahnstraße* and various city-images characterised by the look of a *Flaneur*[138]. The meaning of perception, apart from the general 'signs of the present' in Benjamin's thought, is also connected to the changed way of 'seeing', which means seeing not only the sensual, but also discovering the non-sensual similarities in art, written documents or language; it means reading the contents that were 'never written' (*Was nie geschrieben wurde*, lesen 1933b: 213).

Benjamin considered his task of writing the *Kunstwerk* as both a diagnostic of the time as well as the destiny of art in his own time. This is explicit in both the letter to Brecht, which I quoted in the *Introduction* of this part, and also, for instance, in his letter to Horkheimer on 16 October, 1935: "Diese Überlegungen machen den Versuch, den Fragen der Kunsttheorie eine wahrhaft gegenwärtige Gestalt zu geben: und zwar von innen her, unter Vermeidung aller unvermittelten Beziehung auf Politik." (Br. 690) The object of Benjamin's critique of traditional art was related to its characterisation through contemplation (metaphysics) and with moral questions, especially in Kantian aesthetics. Benjamin visualised a gap between the aesthetic subject and object in this approach, and he attempted to bridge this gap through the idea of the reflection, following the aesthetic theory of early German Romantics. The gap was created because the work of art was not conceived of as independent, but was approached as an object in observing subjective ratio. Following mainly Schlegel's idea of understanding the work of art as autonomous, but still reachable through art critique, Benjamin criticised both the rationalism and the subject/object distinction in aesthetic perception. He searched for the link that would both leave the aesthetic subject and object as independent in themselves, and that would constitute an essential bondage between them through experience and perception.

There were certainly many opinions as to how contemporaneous Benjamin's analysis was, since its main topics, such as the 'new' reproduction technique, referred to the development that started in the beginning of the 19th century, as the first experiments with the chemical photography were conducted by Joseph Niépce in 1916, and were followed by Henry Fox Talbot in 1951. Altogether, the history of mechanically transferred perception reached even further back than this, until the *camera obscura*, in which the perception of space was done through a small hole, through which the object was projected as a reversed image on the wall[139]. Nevertheless, Benjamin was himself well aware of the long history of the reproducibility of art. The novelty was not the mechanical reproduction, but rather, the change in the conception of art and its position in art history. The change was the *temporal disruption*, which might also have led to the *re-conceptualisation of artwork* in its social and political context, and finally, to the discovery of new artistic ways of expression.

Following my characterisation of Benjamin's philosophy as both a critique and creation, the *concept* includes the core of the analysis. Due to his specific way of using the concepts, they function both as a construction and recon-

struction of the object. In the *Kunstwerk,* the reconstruction of art implies the rupture in tradition, which is actualised as being the critical moment in history. This is explicit in the fragment of Foncillon, which Benjamin had collected as intending to enclose it into a further version of the *Theses:* "A l'instant oú elle (*l'oeuvre d'art*/kl) naît, elle este Phénomene de rupture. Une expression courante nous le fait vivement sentir: 'faire date', ce n'est pas intervenir passivement dans la chronologie, c'est brusquer le moment." (Foncillon, *Vie des formes,* Paris 1934: 94, after Benjamin GS I.3: 1229-1230) The rupture that the work of art causes into history and the idea of time in this new era, is the active and sudden moment, which explodes the chronology.

In my research I have found hardly any mention to Benjamin's specific idea of temporalized politics, which appears throughout his work, but is the most explicitly expressed in his *Copernican change* (PW: 490-491) I quoted in the *Preface.* The importance of experiencing the present is consolidated in its heterogeneity as well as in the form of the ambiguity of the historical era. On the one side is Benjamin's argument for the sudden awakening of the present as a historico-philosophical idea, the experience that is possible to catch by an individual act of consciousness. In the special case of the *Kunstwerk,* the rupture is described in the way in which a work of art is related to modernity and to its changed and contingent aesthetic and social conditions. Benjamin sees the close connection between the phenomena of reproducibility, destruction and politicisation (*Reproduzierbarkeit-Zerstreuung-Politisierung,* GS VII.2: 679) of art. The unity of artwork becomes scattered through the transformation of the temporal and spatial categories through which the concept of the work of art is formed. The destruction of the tradition, *die Zerstreuung der Tradition,* is only a step behind the re-conceptualisation of art. Art becomes politicised through the 'construction' process, as it has to be re-constructed in the present conditions. The political moment in the conceptual sense is also included in Benjamin's call for the formation of concepts of art that would support revolutionary demands (*Forderungen*) in art politics especially in fighting againts fascist aesthetics (1936a: 350).

Benjamin also describes the change as the detachment from the mythic and ritual forms of creating and perceiving art. At the same time, and bound with the avant-garde movements in the beginning of this century, art becomes an essential expression of the political, as it is an expression of the aesthetic world of ideas. Yet, the historical political importance of Benjamin's work, is further stressed by the emergence of the fascist regime. Within his temporalized terms, Benjamin characterises the fascist aesthetics as practising the mythos of the eternal, and it signifies the obscure recurrence of the ideas of the ancient in the Western history, which Benjamin considers as continuing the mythical continuum of the power.

In searching for ways to capture the present time, Benjamin comes to recognise the possibilities that the cinematic images create: to preserve the movement and actuality of every present situation and to contrast and reflect the situations in coming times. The dualistic nature of capturing and expressing the present, of which the major examples are derived from Soviet films, awake-

ned Benjamin's optimism regarding the *politicization of aesthetics* from its elitist chambers towards the wider audience. The 'hour of destiny' of art[140] that Benjamin intended to make apparent, included the transformation of the concept, idea, understanding and producing art. Following Gertrud Koch's interpretation, for Benjamin, the "grid towards the present provides spatial orientation" especially in the suggestion to open the new *Spielraum* of art[141]. From my point of view, the question of how it provides a *temporal Spielraum* as both an orientation into the present and its critique, is interesting. Not to mention the perspective of 'playing' with time in terms seeing art imitating itself, and constructing an *Erscheinung* of the aesthetic world in itself.

Benjamin claims that the cinema opens the largest experimental space for speculation on the present possibilities, and he decisively analyses what it is that makes the cinema new and different from the earlier, aura-filled art forms (1936a: 373). In the studio, the mechanical equipment penetrates so deeply into the reality, that freeing it from the substance of equipment is the result of a special procedure, namely by shooting with specially adjusted cameras and mounting the shots together with other similar ones. Here, the reality, as primarily equipment-free, has become the height of artifice. Yet, the sight of immediate reality has become the blue flower, orchid, in the land of technology (1936a: 373). The ability to immediately show the reality is the aspect that overcomes all other aspects that the technology might bring.

As Koch emphasises, Benjamin discovers the "kairotic constellation" in this orchid land[142]. This is the only interpretation so far in which I have found the concept of Kairos used in the interpretation of Benjamin[143]. The idea of the orchid is followed by the obscure metaphor describing the cameraman and the painter through the ideas of surgical operation. The surgeon (cameraman) represents the opposition of the magician (the painter). As the surgeon 'cuts into the patient's body', the camera is seen as to penetrate into the 'web of circumstances' that saves the phenomenological immediacy as the telos of artifice (1936a: 373). Although it seems that the example is especially tailored to the idea of film, Benjamin's example of the surgeon was already present in his dissertation. In that case by quoting Schelling's words, Benjamin marks the difference between critic and commentary. "Daher sollte es kritische Journale geben, die die Autoren kunstmäßig medizinisch und chirurgisch behandelten und nicht bloß die Krankheit aufspürten und mit Schadenfreude bekannt machten." (*Schelling Schriften* 30, quoted after Benjamin 1919: 70) The critique has the task of revealing the internal structure of the phenomenon in question, as the surgeon penetrates into the internal texture of the object/patient.

In Benjamin's terms the matter of how the film brought the 'everyday' to close perception, affected the destruction of the cultic distance between the work of art and its spectator. In this sense, cinema can be interpreted as an example of the Image-space (*Bildraum*), in which various elements of the perception of the work of art, the deciphering of the present surroundings, and the space that the elements of image, the subject of perception and the object perceived are merged together. These elements are supposed to form an Image-space that it also "a 100 percent pure space for political action" (1929: 309).

If the idea of distance in the Image-space is speculated on further, it should be distinguished in spatial and temporal terms. As the Image-space destroyed the cultic element embedded in the aesthetic mythos, it scattered the bourgeois approach to art. In the qualitative meaning, the Image-space created more distinguished way of approaching temporalities, through its depth, through intervals and ruptures, or through the montage of moments and their experience. The image of time that penetrates the consciousness into the present, is also included in the *Theses of History*, as the Now-time (*Jetztzeit*). The time in which the moment is distinguished from the continuous history, is seen as filled with the presence of the Now. It is seen as simultaneously coming to a momentary standstill, and potentially to its fulfilment.

The contemporary development in art technologies recognise it as a common sense idea that the changes of perception and the development of the reproduction are continuously advancing. The technological transformation continuously changes the relation between the real and the illusory, and consequently, the nature of art as a representation of 'reality' has changed. The space of 'reality' in the contemporary world appears in the era of the hypermedia, in which words travel around virtual worlds, in cyber-spaces of interactive global communication, which have opened up the temporal *Spielraum* towards electronic, digital and virtual realities. The limits of the body, language, image and machine must now be redefined in a 'dawning post-biological' age[144], which seems to already exist in-between science-fiction like ideas of a human being and the existing reality. In the 'media-age', or even the 'media revolution', the visual mediation between the 'real present', the experiencing subject and language, is increasingly important, and becomes acknowledged also in the political discussion[145]. In this, art is viewed as being transformed from the sphere of representation and the appearance of reality, towards art as a disappearance[146].

Despite the extremely rapid change in technology and reproduction technology since the beginning of this century, Benjamin's ideas on the role of reproduction in art are regularly quoted in contemporary cultural theory. Whether the reason is the fashionable appearance of Benjamin in cultural theory since the 1980's, or the actuality of his ideas, is unimportant. There are a large number of articles dealing with the reversions and ironizations of the *Kunstwerk* essay, such as the work of art in the mechanical age (which is a wrong translation form the original), electronic age, cybernetic and post-photographic eras[147]. Each of them are correct at least on one point, namely, that the rupture that occurred in the beginning of this century is still visible, although its appearance has changed. The new transformations and temporal-spatial spaces of artistic experimentation have also shifted towards new categories of temporal thinking, whether discussed in an historical, political or aesthetic sense. The increasing importance of the contemporary is to position the *different, qualitative understanding* of these temporalities as shifting from the quantitative reflection on time. Issues, such as the expansion of visual culture, electric communication, the change of 'reality' in temporal and spatial terms, all challenge the discussion on and redefinition of politics and arts in research and praxis.

III
IMAGES AS PASSAGES TO TIME

A. ON THE TURN TO IMAGES

1. FROM THE INTENSIFICATION TO THE ACTUALISATION OF TIME

Throughout my interpretation, I have emphasised the way in which Benjamin tends to drift into a limit-space of thinking. For example, this was expressed in reading the Theses, the way in which the moments of the *dialektisches Bild, Jetztzeit* or *Geistesgegenwart* were presented as moments that interrupt the chronological idea of time. In the *Kunstwerk* section, I discussed the way in which the non-sensuous elements of perception interact with the sensuous during an aesthetic experience. This view potentially confuses the limit between text and images, and between reading and seeing.

On the whole, the procedure of my research has been to unfold Benjamin's concepts through the way in which they allow for breaches in approaching linear time, homogeneous history, the history of art, or the ideas of origins and the authenticity of art. I have emphasised a specific perspective on time in Benjamin's work, which is impossible to synchronise under presupposed temporal continuum, but, rather, which intensifies the individual experience on the diversity of the present. This is also the reason for my interpreting Benjamin as approaching the limit-spaces of temporal dimensions of the past, present and future, an approach, which form a cairologic access to the course of time. The new concepts. which are defined at the moment of rupture and critique, operate as windows towards the present. However, this window not only shows the 'reality' as it is: it includes also a prismatic side of reality, in which the external and internal sides of the perception are reflected on. As a temporal dimension, the present as an object of perception and knowledge, appears as 'extended', and at the same time it is dispersed into a multi-dimen-

sional layers of experiences, as it is intensified with the moments of Now. The concepts which are tied to this experience of the present time, function roughly in two ways. *Firstly,* as including the knowledge of time and *secondly,* as giving meaning to it, as they simultaneously create the present.

If the temporal question in Benjamin's thought is discussed in historico-philosophical terms, the temporal limit-space does not, at first sight, go any further than this. Benjamin appears to be ignorant to the modern request to speculate on the coming time. He does not raise questions as *what* is the consequence of the emphasised moment of action? *How* is it possible to interrupt the linear course of events in concrete terms? – or – *What* does the Now-time have to offer in a broader context, if it is thought of as a cornerstone of thinking in 'political categories'? The future, conceived of as an ordinary horizon of action or sphere of expectations, is dimmed in Benjamin's work. The future exists only as a seed in the present, in the process of creation. The realisation of the Kairos remains within the frames of the capability of the subject to turn the moments of recognition into action.

In other words, problems occur, if we pose questions following a discourse that is *external* from the problem of temporality itself. There are no sufficient answers to such questions in Benjamin's work, since the remainder of the interpretation, and the decision as to *how* we might act 'after' either the recognition of the moment of the Now or the achievement of the sovereignty of action, is left up to the questioner him or herself. This 'answer' leaves the subject with the idea of the radical freedom of action.

However, instead of pursuing this idea further, I turn back to Benjamin's own concepts and further question, how we might find the disruption and also a way out of the linearity in terms of images[1]. My presupposition is that the images as they appear in Benjamin's work as both concepts and 'real' or textual images, are not only important in illustrating a theory or as metaphorical textual images. Instead, the idea of visual perception and the interpretation of images can be conceived of as constituting elements in the process of thinking itself, since, for Benjamin, the matter of images is also an epistemological question. Generally I approach the idea of the constitution of temporal knowledge as an interaction between the textual-discursive and image material. Hence, I shall not claim the similarity between the text and image as constituting knowledge, but instead I stress their difference and their complementary character in this process.

In terms of the interpretative methods, the turn to images could describe the turn to the speculation on the meaning of the interaction between text and images as producing and reflecting the knowledge in general, or in this case, on time in particular. It is not a novel idea that mental representation in general, and mental imagery in particular, have virtual battlegrounds in both modern philosophical and psychoanalytical theories of mind[2]. However, in epistemological questions, the issue of images is generally conceived of as minor, in comparison to text. Outlining a *linguistic turn* during this century, and conceiving of language as an essential factor in mediating and constituting reality, is a much discussed topic[3]. Yet, similarly to images, also speech, langua-

ge and concepts attempt to constitute knowledge and describe objects that are unable to 'speak' for themselves. Altogether, it is possible, yet not that common, to discuss the *turn to images* as mediating and constituting reality. It is a turn which, parallel to the linguistic turn, is omnipresent especially in the second half of this century.

The contemporary development techniques of reproduction, re-actualise the matters of origins, authenticity, tradition and history. In these terms, it is not too far fetched to actualise Benjamin's thinking in relation to the changing role of the images. However, this cannot be done only through the idea of *techniques* of reproduction, since the meaning of the image in the entirety of Benjamin's work, is not at all simple. In the following section, I shall combine some of the issues outlined in the preceding parts, as I approach Benjamin's concept of images as interpreted both from a historico-temporal point of view and with regard to the question of how they represent temporal experiences in themselves.

Benjamin uses the multiple definitions of the concept of image, which can be roughly distinguished as follows. *Firstly,* he poses them in the context of historical documents, which he partly approaches analogously to texts. They are considered as the documents that preserve the 'seeds of time' in their internal texture, and they are expressed by concepts like dialectical or mnemonic image *(Erinnerungsbild)*. *Secondly,* he sees consciousness as working in an image-like manner, as it constructs thought-images *(Denkbilder)*[4]. In order to find the ideas of the thought-images, we can follow the paths characterised by Benjamin's notions on both the 'expanded reading' and the non-sensuous similitude (1933 a, b), which shall be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Benjamin's *Denkbilder* could also be interpreted as characterising the non-discursive course of thinking, as well as reflecting his own thinking, which expresses the interplay of discursive and images.

Thirdly, Benjamin also presents collective concepts, such as history or tradition as constellations of texts and images. They are logically readable in a different sense than in the idea of reading history as a *textum*. Pace Benjamin, the *textum* of images is more specifically readable only during the time of the formation of their 'critical core' (PW: 578). For instance, Benjamin uses the idea of the phantasm of the 19th century, as he describes the dream images as gaining increased form of ideology, and he especially uses the concept of phantasmagoria, including a critique of commodity in the beginning of the capitalist society. In this, he also refers back to the mythical baroque era and the emblems that, according to him, were to become produced as modern and commercialised images in the era of advertisement[5]. The phantasms are understood as revived versions of the impressions, recalled by the imagination in the absence of the objects that originally stimulated them. Phantasmagoria describes the world of illusion, in which the background of the concept is in the early illusionary images. Benjamin also refers to phantasmagoria as an early form of the cinema that represents the 'grotesque and macabre messages' as an illusion of the moving images. Also, the idea of 'happiness' as a temporal phantasmagoria, becomes commercialised like the early stage of the moving image,

which moves back and forth, but remains out of subjective reach. This includes the dreams of a better future that are tied to continuous technical development, the dream images of advertisement and commodity, in which the phantasms are materialised as objects, and valued as such.

The image of tradition is attached to the signs and symbols of every culture, and as such it is also included both in values and in the 'traces' of history. But, according to Benjamin, every tradition has the possibility to scatter in a historical context, in which the image of the past becomes synchronised with the present, and as in the *Now of Intelligibility*, the ideas of truth, time and history are re-arranged at this moment.

Fourthly, Benjamin uses the image as a method of writing, as he constructs his own book of history, *Das Passagen-Werk*, partly by offering a textual 'image' of the 19th century. The other books that provide images in textual form are *Berliner Kindheit um 1900* and *Einbahnstraße*. These texts are also 'readable' as thought-images, and also include a specific idea of time, memory and history. This reading requires the specific awareness of the reader, in order to interpret the matter in the reflection of his or her own historical context (PW: 574; GS 1.3: 1242)[6].

Inasmuch as the concept *Jetztzeit* strives to *intensify* the moments of the present, the temporal function of the image is to *actualise* it. Additionally, the concepts of images offer spaces for reflections, in which the Jewish-Messianic idea of the historical interruption and the aesthetic disruption outlined in the *Kunstwerk,* can be combined in the space of an image. Here, the 'space' of an image is conceived of as a material, containing, for instance, the aspects of its object, the history, the reflection with the present situation of the observer, and additionally the aesthetic and art historical background of the image.

Because of the 'non-linear' structure of the images and the immediacy of the act of seeing, I interpret the images as offering a different cairologic route towards thinking about time, than the earlier construction of the historical texts. The movement of the image is also described as *sprunghaft,* reminiscent of the *Jetztzeit* consciousness (PW: 576-578; 580; 591-592). This is also the reason why I decipher Benjamin's images as taking another step towards thinking about time, as the experience of time is intensified in the moment of Now. In an image, the flow of time is suddenly interrupted. In this vacuum, which emerges in the fluent movement of time, the present represents itself; every image becomes an essential sign of the exact moment it was reached. Here, an image is also a temporal document that transcends pre-existing categorisations of time. For instance through a photograph, the moment represented can obtain a higher degree of *actuality* in other times, than it had at the moment the events took place (PW: 574).

The higher actuality of these temporal moments means that the art of experience both in and through images is actualised in the *Jetztzeit*. This implies that the intensification of the consciousness of time is transferred from the horizontal idea of ordering time. The second step moves towards the images that construct a vertical hierarchy in experiencing the present. However, here I do not mean hierarchy in an evaluative sense, but rather as creating further dis-

tinctions inside of the experience of present time. The hierarchy also makes it possible to detach the present from its homogeneous understanding, or as an Aristotelian 'point in linear time', since the actualisation means a beginning of a comprehension of time, which is constituted as multiple layers, depths and fractures. The difference between these temporal levels of experience lies mainly in how the time is perceived in the reflection between the subject and object of perception. This also comes back to the question of how the interrelation of the perception and experience constructs the present reality.

At this point, it is especially important to read Benjamin in his own historical context. The role that advertisement, media, television or video has acquired in the end of the 20th century is impossible to interpret simply from the 'technology-positive' point of view presented in Benjamin's *Kunstwerk* essay. Nor is Benjamin's idea of images possible directly to combine with modern media. The question is more complex and its importance depends on how we interpret Benjamin's 'images' altogether. The mass media creates a public space which now is reminiscent of Baudrillard's simulacra, if it has not already surpassed it. Yet this comparison between Benjamin's view on the reproducibility of art is not only relevant as the question of the original and copy, since Benjamin's image-concepts provide a perspective from which to approach media also from the potential point of its self-critique and self-reflection.

2. BENJAMIN'S MIMESIS

The approach to the temporal and historical transformation of the concepts, as well as the shift to images as an epistemological question, has a potential background rooted in Benjamin's interest in language. The role of analogies as constructing human language fascinated Benjamin throughout his work, and the essays on mimesis from the year 1933 were his main contribution on these issue[7]. In addition to contributing to the theory of language, these texts merge the theological and historical motives of his thinking, which are embedded in language. Basically, Benjamin regards sounds and other non-discursive elements such as intuition, visual signs or memories as contributing essentially to the construction of 'language'. Benjamin's 1916 text *Über die Sprache überhaupt und über die Sprache des Menschen*, already included Herder's view that "human beings invent language themselves from the sounds of the living nature"[8].

Nevertheless, his essays, especially those written during the 1930's, do not offer a magical view of language, as Adorno and Habermas tend to claim, rather, Benjamin's approach is anthropological and historical, as he describes the historical transformation from non-sensuous correspondences to the construction of language[9]. Benjamin's expansion of language towards reaching its non-discursive origins, has an implicit reference to Nietzsche's thought. For instance, in *Menschlisches Allzumenschliches*, Nietzsche criticises words, since the world that they describe *changes* their internal and external reality. Language in a culture allows people to construct their own worlds separately from those of other people[10]. The supposition that it is possible to reach the truth only with the help of language is also a mistake, which creates a 'belief in the discovered truth' *(Glaube an die gefundene Wahrheit)*. In its entirety, understanding includes aspects that go beyond language, as Nietzsche proclaims: the person who thinks only within a language is an orator, not a thinker, *aber wer in Worten denkt, denkt als Redner und nicht als Denker*[11]. The distinction between an orator and a thinker is made basically through the problematic of the non-discursive element in language, which might also include the imaginary.

Nietzsche emphasises the aspect of intuition, distinguishing between intuition and conceptual thinking. However, he does not attempt to conceptualise the intuitive thinking, but he raises its importance as liberating the mind from mere linguistic abstractions.

Benjamin considers language to also contain audio-visual and visual elements, such as the language of music, images, plastic, or techniques, as its 'spiritual content' (*geistige Inhalt*, 1916: 140). As Benjamin tends to relativise the limits between seeing, reading, and thinking, he offers thought-images in written form, as completing the purely discursive thinking. In this sense his approach follows the Nietzschean idea of intuition and images as complementing conceptual thinking, and in some points, as attempting to expand the sphere of the discursive. Benjamin's play between texts and their interpretation is part of the process that challenges the logistic-linear way of understanding language and knowledge it mediates.

The other aspect in Benjamin's linguistic riddle, is again the critique of rationalist thought, as he claims in stating a paradox between the linguistic and spiritual essence (*Wesen)* of language, which is expressed in the double meaning of the Logos (*Doppelsinn des Wortes Logos*, 1916: 141). With his words, this double meaning is the space in which the spiritual and linguistic elements are inseparably bound together. The non-soluable paradox is that there are always elements that are impossible to mediate *(Unmittelbarkeit)* through language, and, for Benjamin, this remains the basic problem of the theory of language (1916: 142-143).

In Benjamin's early thought, the human being is presented as converting objects into language, an idea that also encompasses the problem of translation. Namely, once the language has already been converted, how then are we to translate the meanings, especially the non-discursive and the spiritual, into another language (cf. 1923)? What Benjamin does see as being possible to mediate in language is the linguistic element of 'the spirit'. However, this spiritual element is mediated *in* the language, not *through* the language (1916: 142), which means that the 'spiritual' is in the language itself and not behind or beyond it.

Also here, Benjamin's critique of the Kantian concept of experience is important, not only as the critique of the concept of experience, but additionally in connection with Benjamin's early theory of language. As Benjamin paid attention to the concepts of knowledge and experience, and how they are thought to be connected in empirical consciousness, he identified with the historical models of perception and psychic states, which lie outside the frame of reference of Enlightenment thought; they are the occult, madness and pre-animistic myth[12]. For Benjamin, the Kantian concept of knowledge presents subjective knowledge as a myth[13]. Benjamin claims that not the pre-rational idea of knowledge, but the rational and empirical conception of knowledge, which is based on the empirical idea of experience, is actually the naive experience.

In the pre-rational world of perception, objects are not as strongly connected through the conceptual language, as they are interconnected through their similarity[14]. The ideas of similarity and mimesis, and the aspects of intui-

tion and non-sensuous similitude, were among the issues which were rejected in the empirical or rational idea of knowledge. This rejection is one reason why Benjamin sees the empirical or rational knowledge as inhuman and mechanistic, and he stresses the possibilities to pay attention to these reduced elements in human language and thinking. One example of this is Benjamin's *Programm,* which intends to construct the idea of experience that would scatter the reductive categories between reason, understanding and intuition, and also to find the space to connect them in his extended concept of experience. As I do not intend to delve deeper into the problem of knowledge, I shall focus on the connection between *perception* and *experience,* in marking the background of Benjamin's claim that both of them underwent essential changes during modernity[15].

2.1. Similitude and Perception

In Lehre vom Ähnlichen (1933), Benjamin begins his examples of non-sensuous similarities by referring to children's games as interlaced with mimetic models of behaviour. He observes that during play, children not only mimic other humans, but also objects, such as windmills or trains. This causes Benjamin to reflect on the meaning of performing mimetic attitude (1933a: 205). In comparison to childhood, as well as to the early development of mankind in which the mimetic genius is one of the life-determining forces, the mimic ability and mimetic faculty seem to disappear in the 'adultery' of the modern world. The signified world *(Merkwelt)* of modern human beings contains fewer of those magical correspondences than the world of ancient people or even primitive people (1933a: 206). Benjamin, however, makes an interesting assumption; it is that the mimetic ability has possibly not disappeared, but it has merely been transferred: "Die Frage ist nur die: ob es sich um ein Absterben des mimetischen Vermögens oder aber vielleicht um eine mit ihm stattgehabte Verwandlung handelt." (1933a: 206) The mimetic attitude can be transferred just as non-sensuous, non-speakable, and non-visible aspects are transferred into language. However, this side remains included in human expression, as the other, and often invisible, side of the ratio. Mimicry appears in the function of the *Darstellung* of language, which also constructs the basis for the experience of non-sensuous correspondences[16].

Benjamin specifically emphasises the liquidation of magic by the transformation of the earlier forms of expression into a universe of written and spoken language. He sees the aural and visual elements of language as residuals of the powerful, natural and supernatural correspondences that predominated the world of the primitives (1933a: 206). As Rabinbach notes, the acknowledgement of this idea is linked with Benjamin's conception of time as an "instantaneous flash", as opposed to the duration. Here, the non-sensuous similarity is possible to locate in the root of the language, and its essence is reminiscent of the lost world of experience[17]. Compared to the moment of birth, which is a decisive moment in the acknowledgement of instantaneous similitude, the

perception of similarity is bound to an instantaneous flash. "Der Augenblick der Geburt, der hier entscheiden soll, ist aber ein Nu. Das lenkt den Blick auf eine andere Eigentümlichkeit im Bereiche der Ähnlichkeit. Ihre Wahrnehmung ist in jedem Fall an ein Aufblitzen gebunden. Sie huscht vorbei, ist vielleicht Wiederzugewinnen, aber kann nicht eigentlich wie andere Wahrnehmungen festgehalten werden." (1933a: 206)

Since the instantaneous flash of the perception slips by and cannot be held fast, it provides a glimpse into the potential sphere of the similitude of the phenomena that are transferred from the pre-rational knowledge and experience to the aforementioned invisible aspect of the ratio. Here, we can further reflect the importance of the *temporal moment* which was discussed in the interpretation of the fifth Thesis of History. In the Thesis, the true moment of history appears only as a flash. The problem is, how are we to grasp time, or the true *image* of 'flashing and actual' time. I argue that in the fifth Thesis, Benjamin repeats the idea of non-sensuous similitude, but he connects it with the relation between image and the temporality of the truth. The image of the past *(Bild der Vergangenheit)* can be recognised similarly to how a flash of memory is recognised in the present consciousness. As the similarity appears, the moment should be reached and its 'message' unfolded.

Especially in this connection, Benjamin seems to connote the acknowledgement of the similarity as visual, and as temporally dependent on the subjective experience, since he introduces an important moment of time, *Zeitmoment,* that binds the perception of similarities together (1933a: 206-207). What I see as happening in between Benjamin's earlier theory of language and the later reflections on time and history, is that the idea of non-sensuous similarities gains an imaginary character in his thinking. Nevertheless, both the concept of images themselves and the art of perception, seem to remain very heterogeneous in Benjamin's thinking.

The issues derived from the sphere of 'non-sensuous similarity' and visual experience are important figures in considering the art of experiences that Benjamin might have had in mind in his broader theory of experience. The ability to perceive similarities could be compared to an unconscious act, which recognises mental and memoric images conserved in the non-voluntary memory (cf. GS 1.3. 1233; 1929b: 311-314, and 1939a: 609-615). This art of perception challenges the rational (verbal) way of building the theory of knowledge. Benjamin also argues in his later work, that the text, as it gains authority in its printed form, transferred knowledge and narration towards superficial information. The information will then be transferred towards the sensation, searching for the shock effect rather than the intellect or experience (1939a: 611). In this, Benjamin noted how the printed word in newspapers and books changes the idea of experience towards the emphasis of knowledge and ratio. It reduces the importance of images and distracts the memory, in the sense that it is not needed to form and mediate a tradition as in traditional societies, in which the oral narration was an important way of mediating earlier experiences. According to this development, the role of language also changes. The mimetic faculty, which in Benjamin's essay is supposed to disappear in the

sense that we do not have the ability to perceive non-sensuous similitude, is transferred to the canon of language (1933a: 207). Yet, the new form of experience, which should be searched for in this linguistic 'space', would also include the aspects of the 'forgotten' humanity as a broadened perception and experience.

The mimetic behaviour is granted a space in the origin of language, which is called its onomatopoetic element. Benjamin claims that the onomatopoetic element occupies a space in language, although the size of the space is dependant of the particular theory of language. He also refers shortly to Rudolf Leonhardt's claim, that "every word – and the whole language is onomatopoetic" (1933a: 207). That is, however, not how Benjamin himself sees the nature of language. Referring to the semiotic theories of the beginning of the century, Benjamin criticises the view that language is agreed upon system of signs. As his own approach combines the various aspects as a 'constellation' or *Darstellung* of language, it includes elements of mystical and theological theories of language, although it is also not alien to empirical philology (1933a: 207-208, cf. 1935b).

Deriving only from systematic attempts to define the 'essence' of language, Benjamin's approach remains gestural. Nevertheless, it contains a specific theoretical openness in underlining that the non-sensuous element is the mediating bind which connects both the spoken and written word, and also what is meant, spoken and written in words themselves. It is important to understand that, for Benjamin, the connection between what is spoken and what is written always emerges as new, original and underivable (1933a: 208-209). This emphasises the constant creativity and liveliness of language, containing far more than only the "graphic images' *(Schriftbild)* and spoken words. Actually, the graphic images, the *Schrift*, become an archive of the non-sensuous similitude and non-sensuous correspondence. This fact is embedded in Benjamin's claim of the reading as a double sided activity; the reading of the magical as well as the profane aspects necessarily means reading the non-sensuous and the sensuous meanings (1933a: 209).

3. DIALECTICAL IMAGE

The *historical images* are possible to interpret only in a certain temporal context, since their readability *(Lesbarkeit)* is tied to the time in which the images are possible to decipher[18]. This implies a relation to historical time, but not in the sense that it would be understood as an 'immediate window' to it, since Benjamin does not conceive of the 'reality' as constant or pre-existent but it is understood as a configuration that becomes possible to decipher in the moment of insight. A further reason for viewing history as text-like is the idea that its *textum (Gewebe)* can be dismantled and rewoven into another material. As already emphasised, Benjamin considers the text as a dimension of reality, and it is also possible to read an era such as the 19th Century like a book of events[19].

To articulate the past in a *historical* way requires the recognition of the past that appears in the constellation of a single moment. On his interpretation, Benjamin emphasises historical singularity as the primary means of acquiring historical knowledge, as the possibility of historical intelligibility *(Erkennbarkeit)* is only possible in an *historical* moment. It is impossible, at least in terms of the dialectical image, to approach history as a universal or general phenomenon. This implies, as already discussed with the *Theses*, that the reasoning of history or its events is restricted by their singularity (GS 1.3 1233). This singularity also means opening the character of the constellation of the moment, as it includes the various seeds of the present context that can only become explicit through an interpretation (cf. 1940: V-VII). In my view, Benjamin's radical singularity scatters the presupposition that events relate causally to each other. If the historian ignores the impact and influence of the present in the writing of history, she or he will land in the abstract space of a 'backwards turned prophet'. This makes it impossible to reach the truth of the past, the present – or the future (cf. 1940: VII).

Here, the way in which the aspect of *insight (Erkenntnis)* is closely connected

to the visual experience is highlighted. Also the connection between the ideal figures of Historian and Politician, constructed in Benjamin's later work, can be found in the image: "Er (der Historiker/kl) begründet so einen Begriff der Gegenwart als Jetztzeit, in welche gleichsam Splitter der messianischen eingesprengt sind. Dieser Begriff stiftet zwischen Geschichtsschreibung und Politik einen Zusammenhang, der mit dem theologischen zwischen dem Eingedenken und der Erlösung identisch ist. Diese Gegenwart schlägt sich in Bildern nieder, welche man dialektisch nennen kann." (GS 1.3: 1248) Benjamin sketches the thought in which the concepts of the present time are combined with the issues of temporality[20] and images, especially where the concepts of history and politics are concerned[21]. History is compared to theological remembrance, as politics is compared to the idea of redemption. The difference between politics and history is again sketched as the approach between commenting on or actualising the past events through a critique.

The moment of the intelligibility *(Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit)* is the time and place of knowledge. The *dialectical image* emerges in the constellation when the historical moment *(Augenblick)* acquires a specific relationship with the present moment. This is characterised in terms of dialectics, temporality and the visual approach to time. Recognising the flashing image of the past is the only way to decipher the messages buried in it, whether they are understood as memory-images or as real-historical testimony. However, it becomes problematic to make a distinction in these terms, as to what Benjamin means with the *Jetztzeit* on the one hand, and with the *dialektisches Bild* on the other.

The various notions of both the Intelligibility of the Now, and the dialectical image as a confrontation between Now and Then, create 'stands of experience' that are useful sources of knowledge about the present which cannot be synchronised. As the moments materialise temporality in various ways within themselves, the images also carry an internal 'temporal index' (PW: 577-578; see also 1940: XIV). This means that every present is 'defined' through its own synchronous images – although, I do not see them as necessarily synchronous with each other. I consider the *Jetztzeit* and the *dialektisches Bild* as two possible moments that are conceptualised in order to achieve the insight of time. The difference between them seems to be more a difference between the modes of reflection than the intensity of experience.

If the moments are to be acknowledged, they must become readable. This supports the hypothesis that the present seems to be indefinable in general, although it only remains so until the intelligibility, or the actualisation, occur[22]. I claim that the present is both visible and readable through various fragments and documents, but *how* it appears has to be configured by every subject him or herself. The collision of the moments appears in the following way as an image: "Nicht so ist es, daß das Vergangene sein Licht auf das Gegenwärtige oder das Gegenwärtige sein Licht auf das Vergangene wirft, sondern Bild ist dasjenige, worin das Gewesene mit dem Jetzt blitzhaft zu einer Konstellation zusammentritt. Mit andern Worten: Bild ist Dialektik im Stillstand. Denn während die Beziehung der Gegenwart zur Vergangenheit eine rein zeitliche, kontinuierliche ist, ist die des Gewesnen zum Jetzt dialektisch: ist nicht Verlauf son-

dern Bild, sprunghaft. – Nur dialektische Bilder sind echte (d.h.: nicht archaische) Bilder; und der Ort, an dem man sie antrifft, ist die Sprache." (PW: 576-577)

The image is defined here as a space in which the Then and the Now form a constellation. The fact that Benjamin characterises the temporal course as dialectical, but not as continuous, is important. With this quote we also come to the problem of the *interpretation* of the nature of Benjamin's images. Namely, the logical question that follows the dictum "that the space, in which one confronts real dialectical images, is in language" is, that the whole concept of image might mean, after all, the literal image or allegory. Hence, this is the place one has to be especially careful of. Firstly, the confrontation of different times is presented as occurring in the image that includes 'both parts' of the reflection, not only that of the author/reader. Although the last sentence in the quote above explicitly refers to language as a 'space' for the images, it not only im-plies textual and discursive idea of language, but also refers to the language of sounds, images and other expressions that are already introduced in Benjamin's theory of mimesis.

Benjamin re-writes this fragment in *Das Passagen-Werk*, and he also adds other elements to it. Here, he leaves out parts of the text quoted above: "...Mit anderen Worten: Bild ist die Dialektik im Stillstand. Denn während die Be-ziehung der Gegenwart zur Vergangenheit eine rein zeitliche, ist, ist die des Gewesnen zum Jetzt eine dialektische: nicht zeitliche sondern bildliche Natur. Nur dialektische Bilder sind echte geschichtliche d.h.: nicht archaische Bilder. Das gelesene Bild, will sagen das Bild im Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit trägt im höchsten Grade den Stempel des kritischen, gefährlichen Moments, welcher allem Lesen zugrunde liegt." (PW: 578)

The complex reference to language as the space of images is now missing. It emphasises the obvious matter that the specific character of images was still open for Benjamin, and it would be incorrect to interpret it simply as an allegory, similar to his use of the literary image in the earlier work. Here, the 'dialectical' specifically refers to the discontinuous character of time. The reason for this can be seen in the phrase in which he, more or less consciously, parallels the 'temporal' to the 'continuous'. The dialectical images are representations of non-linearity. Deciphering them also means 'reading' them which could be interpreted as a moment of *critique* (cf. PW: 578). The images include the most immediate critical moment that can possibly be actualised in reading, which makes the images and their interpretation possible to be characterised in 'political categories', as they offer a disruption to linear time. On the whole, Benjamin sees the temporal knowledge through the metaphor of a scale, on one side of which is the Then, and on the other side is the knowledge of the present Now[23].

4. IMAGE-SPACE

The specific image in Benjamin's thought is interpreted above as remaining between literary and temporal or historical images. However, the question of what the readability of an image mean, is yet to be discussed. In an academic discussion, the well-known problem of interpreting images is reflected in terms of semiotics and later, also in structuralism[24]. However, the reason why I do not decipher the question of Benjamin's images simply by semiotic means, lies in the idea that semiotics approach the object of interpretation primarily with textual means.

The dialectic of words and images seems to be embedded in the fabric of signs that culture weaves around itself. This is significant in understanding of Benjamin's idea from the 'book of nature', when we keep in mind that also this book is only one way of unfolding reality. Modifying Benjamin's metaphor, the reality might appear through the surrealist book, which combines text and images in their varying constellations. For instance, Benjamin's aesthetic critique constantly returns to this relationship between word and image. As Caygill remarks, the relationship is not only limited to those two aspects, but also comes to include the other issues of space and time, history, politics and technology. Here, Caygill refers to Benjamin's early fragment on perception as 'reading' with which he begins his research on Benjamin. Benjamin describes, although extremely shortly, that 'reading' concerns the image which is presented on the surface of the configuration[25].

> Wahrnehmung ist lesen
> Lesbar ist nur in der Fläche Erscheinendes. [...]
> Fläche die Configuration ist – absoluter Zusammenhang (GS VI: 32)[26].

Words and images appear here as both means of representation and material for the experiences. The fragment expresses the multiplicity of levels (surface, mark and configuration), as Benjamin deciphers the reality and phenomena in

which only the surface is readable. Still, the most crucial question appears on this surface of the configuration, namely, how are the various elements of text and image connected to each other?

According to Mitchell, the modern pictorial image, like the ancient conception of 'likeness' is eventually revealed to be linguistic in its inner workings. There is the natural, mimetic image, which captures what it represents, as well as its pictorial rival. The artificial, expressive image cannot 'look like' what it represents, because what it represents can only be conveyed in words[27]. Basically both this problem and the semiotic opposites are seen as rooted in the traditional difference between poetry and painting[28]. This is obviously the difference to which also Benjamin refers. Yet, in the more contemporary context, the discussion on the relation between text and images has tended to reduce the problem of poetic or concrete image, to a problem of a grammar. Today, the difference between images and texts are tackled when the idea of image has transformed into forms like the analogical and digitalized, the iconic and the symbolic, the single and the double articulated. These terms, derived from fields such as system analysis, semiotics and linguistics, also seem to point towards a new, more systematic understanding of the boundaries between poetry and painting.

Benjamin's Image-space *(Bildraum)* does not offer an answer to this complex question of text and images. Yet, it does offer a perspective on a broader reflection of images, as the distinctive limits between signified/signifier and aesthetic object/subject seem to break down both in the intellectual reflection and in the action. Where the concept of the dialectical image remains on a theoretical level, and also on the level of the surface/configuration in approaching the epistemological questions of the deciphering of the present, the function of the Image-space introduces the perspective of conceptualising the subjectivity and perception. The interplay between subject and perception becomes a reflective relationship, in which the spatial and temporal borders between the aesthetic object and subject are neither visible nor simply distinguishable. Whereas the dialectical image seems to be a more historical concept, the Image-space also includes the singular actor, the bodily aspect and the act of perception. Any 'actor' in a present situation can be interpreted as existing in an Image-space, in which the limits between perceiving subjects and objects, and the moments of the distinctions of time and space are blurred. In a way, the Image-space extends the time of the Now towards a more spatialized and also physical way of experiencing. The subject and object are situated in reflective relation to each other, which derives from the dialectical idea. Still, in Benjamin work, the idea of reflection is expanded towards the process of perception that also consists of disruption, non-synthesis, infiniteness, alienation, knowledge and critique.

The early idea sketching the Image-space in Benjamin's thought might have already been characterised in the fictional dialogue *Der Regenbogen* (1915). The idea that one melts into a space, which here is purely the fantasy, is described in Margarethe's words: "So war es im Traum, ich war nichts als Sehen. Alle anderen Sinne waren vergessen, verschwunden. Auch ich selbst war nicht,

nicht mein Verstand, der die Dinge aus den Bildern der Sinne erschließt. Ich war keine Sehende, ich war nur Sehen. Und was ich sah, waren nicht Dinge, Georg, nur Farben. Und ich selbst war gefärbt in dieser Landschaft." (1915b: 19-20)

Here, the idea of melting through the sense of vision without experiencing distance is reminiscent of the imagination, which is still present in the later idea of Image-space. At the first place it is important to overcome the limits of understanding and emotion, and to think about the Image-space as a visual space, characterised by the subjective experience and the visual sense. Parallel to this visuality and experience, I would, however, stress also the other part, which is the rational and cognitive element of experience. The logos, as it is 'double sided' for Benjamin, is here as invisible as the image and non-sensuous appear as absent in the rational idea of knowledge. I consider this preliminary Image-space as being transformed towards the idea in which the 'images' also refer to concrete artistic or cinematic images, as the reflection, of which vision is the main component, becomes the configuration of the perceptual elements.

The basic idea of how *Bildraum* was thematized in *Der Sürrealismus* essay was already discussed above in the chapter on *Towards the Image-space*. In *Der Sürrealismus*, Benjamin transferred the Image-space from the non-representational space towards the more physical space, which, however, merged the conscious and unconscious elements in surrealist art. At the same time, he characterised the Image-space as non-contemplative and political (1929: 302, 309). In the *Kunstwerk* essay Benjamin touches the matter of bodily Image-space in his example of the painter and the surgeon. Here, the terms of space (as distance or closeness) and time are significant in that they add another element to this space. This is also the spatial distance that he used in distinguishing between cultic and non-cultic art. Metaphorically, Benjamin describes the idea that the distance between two bodies vanishes in the situation in which a surgeon is operating on a patient (1936a: 373-374).

The medical metaphor becomes interesting if we reflect further on the theoretical nature of the Image-space. Namely, it also describes, how the concrete distance between actor and object vanishes. This relation becomes further complicated when the 'distance' situation is that of either the actor in the theatre or the actor in front of the camera. The question of the Image-space then becomes a question of the destruction of the limits, whether they are conceived of as physical limits between human and machine, or mental and cognitive limits between subject and object of perception. In this sense it inspires us to think about, the idea of the film-situation, how our focus penetrates the 'web of the reality', and at the same time, how the web becomes increasingly complicated as the limits between the camera image and the perception-image merge.

The comparison between the *unified* image of the painter and the scattered or fragmented 'reality' of the cameraman also describes two different yet actual images of reality. Benjamin does not express any value-aspect between the two, since both realities are equally real and important. In the film studio, the filmic machinery interferes so deeply in the 'reality' that actually thinking about the

reality without any apparatus, is more artificial than the reproduction. In the Image-space neither subject nor object are seen as 'ready made' or stable, since they are both re-constituted in the reflective action. The world is not seen as already constructed, but constantly constituted in the reflectivity. This idea forms the contingency of the events.

5. NEW IMAGES AND 'NEW REALITY'

The dramatic nature of visual culture and the new media has almost disappeared, compared to the effect that images had in the beginning of this century. The shock that the new technologies originally caused has become an everyday phenomenon. Yet, the gap between pro and contra new media in social sciences, a discussion initiated mainly by Horkheimer and Adorno in the *Dialectics of Enlightenment*, has not yet been closed. The sceptical voices come, for instance, from Louis Althusser or Jürgen Habermas, who are concerned about the unidirectional speech in the media[29]. The contra arguments follow roughly, although not explicitly, Duhamel's characterisation of film, which bespeaks the viewpoints of the intellectual and artistic elite of modernity, consigning the masses to the unrelieved hell of popular culture[30]. For Jean Baudrillard, the media constructs a new culture, outside of the more traditional Enlightenment idea of culture[31]. This outside position cannot eternally remain 'outside', as producing an opposition between rational and irrational, high and low, elite and mass cultures. Instead, the interaction and dialogue between the dichotomic extremes has recently emerged, and the ideas, discussed here from the Benjamin-inspired point of view, fit roughly into this 'in-between' space. This position, if it is taken 'outside' of the traditional cultural distinctions, might produce a critical moment for considering both spheres.

From the viewpoint of the 20th *fin de siècle*, there is a further turn in reproduction, which points out a second shift in perception and reproduction, if the first turn is interpreted to be the one Benjamin outlines in his *Kunstwerk* essay. This turn can be seen as the emergence of new digital images, roughly in the middle of 1980's. The new images reflect changes in the subject/object distinction, as the subject can concretely 'step' into an Image-space or a virtual space and he or she has an interactive relationship with the material from the start. In addition to artistic creation, if provided with the suitable computer software, any individual is able to produce, edit, and infinitely transform the

'image reality' from the space of their own screen and project it towards the electronic network. Also, the tele-image and electronic image create new demands for the analysis of the visual culture. In political terms, the new images increase the possibility of invisible control, but on the other hand, the image as proof of reality has lost its power as concrete evidence, which it still had until the creation of contemporary and generally manipulative images.

I claim that Benjamin's concept of Image-space becomes relevant and more concrete in the discussion of these advanced images and multi-media or electronic era or art, than it was in Benjamin's context[32]. The reality (the presupposed 'objective' reality) becomes transformed into the particles, moments, images or faces that are reproduced and also transformed through the camera and the editor. As in the chapter on the *Construction of History*, I consider Benjamin's construction of history as being analogous to his approach to constructivism in film, and this example might be important in interpreting why the history is supposed to 'break down into images'. Here, 'history' is conceived of as a homogeneous concept, which has to 'break down' in the same way in which the homogeneity of the image can be transferred and edited.

In this process, there is an obvious transformation in understanding of a reality and its image, as the images acquire an electronic or digital character. The difference is also similarly characterised in the discussion on cyberspace, in which the 'space' is no longer real, but rather, simultaneous. For instance, Martin Seel connects Benjamin's Image-space to his own reflections on cyberspace, however, without identifying these two spaces. As the cyberspace is at the same time real and simulated, the differentiating aspect of the Image-space is that it is not simulated[33]. The Image-space emphasises the pragmatic and aesthetic perception, as well as the temporal and spatial awareness of the subject. Cyberspace remains conceptually between the real space and Image-space, and the aspect of aesthetic perception and the non-representative side of the object are constitutive of the Image-space.

Naturally, the creation of electronic images, such as tele and video images or numerical images also affect the cinematographic image. The electronic image, which consists of countless and modifiable particles, can transfer in time as well as it exists in time. Reflexively, the understanding of time constantly changes in reflection to the new materials. Although the temporality of the new image can still be conceived of as tied to the space, its spatial structure has also undergone a change. No concrete frame or place exists for this image, and its constitution is dependent of the speed of time and electronic lines, as is the case with, for instance, the television image. This adds layers to the surface of understanding the present, as the present is not extended horizontally, like a simple line. The extension is made to more subtle understanding of time, expanding from a point of the Now deeper inwards, gathering the experiences and reordering them in the multiple memory.

The new images had either to replace or transform the cinema. They have both produced and changed reality, as well as the position of the 'observer' in the era of post-reproducibility and in correspondence to the way in which the meaning of the cinema has changed during the course of this century. As the

Hollywood pioneer, D.W. Griffith, aimed at showing the cinema-audience 'what actually happened' as a window of reality in his *Birth of Nations*, the modern cinema is, as for instance Deleuze shows in his *Cinema*-books, a world in itself. With the logical exception of documentary films, the cinema creates its own image of 'the world' and does not even attempt to show 'real images' of 'real life'[34].

According to Deleuze, the character of the new images is that they no longer have an outside any more, that they are internalised as a whole; rather, they a right side and reverse, as they would have a power to turn back on themselves. In this, they are objects of perpetual re-organisation, in which a new image can arise from any point whatever of the preceding image. Here, the organisation of space loses its privileged directions and the privilege of the vertical with the position of the screen still displays, in favour of omni-directorional space, which varies its angles[35].

The role of the photograph has also crucially changed since Benjamin's theorising. As the photograph can no longer be conceived of as a purely mimetic representation of 'reality', it can also be seen as its ideology, since the photograph consists of the issues of selection. In Stuart Hall's reference to the news photography, it can be viewed as representing the themes of bourgeois society[36] Since its birth, the photographic image has also had other political implications, while it also became a way to control the reality. For instance, John Tagg has researched the use of the photograph as evidence used in courtrooms and as medical or police records. It was never self evident that a photograph is more truthful than any other kind of image, but its truthful character was established by the public authorities[37]. However, the role has changed, since the photo has lost its testimonial power through its aspect of possible manipulation.

The question is also familiar from the work of Michel Foucault who poses the question of how to "recover the hidden structures of power" both in and outside of the official form of legitimate governmental power[38]. Foucault questions the way in which officially unquestionable political conditions, like certain forms of power (power/knowledge) in society, influence thinking. His *Discipline and Punish* raises the issue of 'political technologies' of power, in terms of how in addition to physical punishment, the individuals are made into controlled subjects through *visibility*, as he shows how the forms of power are included in visual control, and architecturally presented in public spaces like prison-houses.

The law and punishments become increasingly self-enforced, as the prisoners imagine themselves as constant objects of potential supervision. This change, which Foucault describes in the context of the idea of control in modern times is important because the agents (prisoners), who had previously been controlled by legal officers, were forced to exercise self-control while the controlling subject became invisible through the architectural solution like that of the Panopticum. Public space could be seen as different spaces of political (immanent) power and as the ways in which that power is represented. Here, the Image-space is the frozen space of public power, in which the limits

between the controlling subject and object are not clearly distinguishable. However, the most evident aspect of this space is the lack of freedom of action, which is characteristic of the Benjaminian Image-space. Furthermore, this invisible controlling power seems to be increasing towards the end of the Millennium, through invisible and electronic control in open spaces like streets, markets and gathering spaces for inhabitants. This electronic control is an everyday reality especially in large urban metropolis, which also complicates the idea of the free and open (public) nature of space. On the other hand, imagology in the ideological sense and art history can be in a reflective relationship, when the issue is social repression or social representation[39].

B. VIEWING CHRIS MARKER'S *LA JETÉE*



Chris Marker Image Library

Zur Kenntnis der *mémoire involontaire*: ihre Bilder kommen nicht allein ungerufen, es handelt sich vielmehr in ihr um Bilder, die wir nie sahen, eher wir uns ihrer erinnerten. Am deutlichsten ist das bei jenen Bildern, auf welchen wir – genau wie in manchen Träumen – selber zu sehen sind. Wir stehen vor uns, wie wir wohl in Urvergangenheit einst irgenwo, doch nie vor unserm Blick, gestanden haben. Und gerade die wichtigsten – die in der Dunkelkammer des gelebten Augenblicks entwickelten – Bilder sind es, welche wir zu sehen bekommen. Man könnte sagen, daß unsern tiefsten Augenblicken gleich jenen Päckchenzigaretten – ein kleines Bildchen, ein Photo unsrer selbst – ist mitgegeben worden. Und jenes "ganze Leben" das, wie wir oft hören, an Sterbenden oder an Menchen, die in der Gefahr zu sterben schweben, vorüberzieht, setzt sich genau aus diesen kleinen Bildchen zusammen (Benjamin, *Aus einer kleinen Rede über Proust*, GS II. 3. 1064)[40].

1. INTRODUCTION

Following Ronald Barthes' *La chambre claire*, the horror of the photograph is that it certifies that the corpse is alive. As a corpse, it is the living image of something dead. For Barthes, the connection between death and a photograph is a very intimate[41]. The death in the photograph is temporally related to the death of a *moment*, which has already passed by when the snapshot is taken. This is reminiscent of Eduardo Cadava's interpretation of Benjamin's temporality of the photograph, and it makes the photograph like a grave of our memory. As long as the memory sustains itself in these images of life or death, the images preserve the time[42]. I agree with the idea, as long as photographic images are conceived of as belonging to the time at which they are taken. Namely, they also belong to each moment in which they are perceived, which opens their temporality towards both the present and the future. If photography is understood in terms of its material content and also as an *event*, a photographic image is a space in which an observer and its object of perception cross each other. Understood broadly, it signifies the merging of their temporal and spatial positions, which is a further example of an Image-space.

In addition to its characterisation as the 'graveyard of the memory', I also consider the photograph as possessing other temporally definable components. For instance, the way in which memory-images *change* their status when they are materialised in documents. Besides the connotation of death, the images signify birth as a perspective and as an initiation of something new[43]. The actualisation of this memory or the emergence of another kind of memory, perhaps that of the experience of a detail, such as the *punctum* in Bathes' *La chambre clair*, has important status in the perceiving subject. These issues characterise generally an awareness which connects the human experience to the visually experienced temporality.

Death is the temporal experience that perhaps plays the most significant role in modern philosophy. This began with its celebration in one of the most influential books of the modern philosophy, namely the portrait of human historicity as restricted by the aspects of birth and death in Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* (1928). The first question in Heidegger's existential ontology is about the meaning and topos of the Being[44]. The specific case of the human being is understood as *Dasein*, 'being there', in which the Sein has a certain space, the 'being there', as a *temporal Dasein*. The temporality and spatiality of the *Dasein* are still restricted to the idea of Being in the World *(In-der-Welt-Sein)*, in which Heidegger's *Dasein* attains a unity of existence. For Heidegger, one origin of entering to the World is that the Being is 'thrown' to this world. It is curious enough that aspect of birth cannot be seen as an aspect of the existential 'beginning' of a being. Instead, the topos of death determines the temporality through Being towards Death *(Sein-zum-Tode)*, which is one factor that causes Angst in the existence of the *Dasein*[45]. The orientation towards the future death is an anticipation in Heidegger's work that, for instance, is missing from Benjamin's. As Heidegger's *Dasein* is spatially homogenised by being in the

world, Benjamin's *Jetztzein* is especially characterised by temporal disruptions, which are potential points of difference in individual existence and the times and places as histories.

As the photographic images tempt interpretation as signs of the dead moments around us, the cinematographic images open a different view towards time. Namely, the view towards the extended present, which is temporally transformable and not restricted to quantitative idea of time. Because time is included in the process of film-making, it can conserve multiple splinters of authentic present moments, although they remain in an edited and reproduced form. Yet, the present moment can be transformed into multiple layers of experience, as it is preserved in the plurality of the reworked and repeated passages. This means, that the present in the cinematic sense is more than merely as a chronological term in-between the past and the future, or as a one-dimensional and momentary space[46] Because of the impact of the 'new technologies', as it is characterised in the interpretation of Benjamin's *Kunstwerk,* the time-understanding reaches another, more complex and multiple level, which is connected to the changes in perception[47]. This level supports the hypothesis that the image, and the ability to include the images in the process of thinking, in the forms of snapshots, disruptions or multi-level experiences, also aids the expansion of the temporal understanding. According to Benjamin, as in the image, the past can obtain a higher degree of *actuality* than it had at the moment in which it took place (PW: 574). This degree of higher temporal actuality and discontinuity is evidently tied with both the present time and future projections.

In this last main chapter, I partly detach myself from 'text-exegetic' method of analysis, and move towards a conceptual praxis, which at this point centers on the discussion of time and images in cinematographic material. Firstly, I chose Deleuze's books to complement the earlier discussion on the 'politics of film' which was done through reading Benjamin's *Kunstwerk.* Here, I intend to shift the issue towards a 'cinematic philosophy', based on which I interpret filmic images from a temporal point of view[48]. Hence, simultaneously my approach shows that Benjamin's thoughts on temporality, although pertaining to the very beginning of the art of film-making, are not outdated if they are reconceptualised and intensified with the experience of the 1990's. Moreover, when combined with Deleuze's *Cinema,* Benjamin's remarks show that the issue of time as it appears in cinema, and especially in the 'time-images' has not even begun to be properly addressed.

Deleuze's *Cinema*-books, connect at least in two points of approach to my own. The first connection is in the interest on the conceptual approach; as Deleuze's books isolate the cinematographic *concepts* as the 'objects' of his research. The concepts are neither technical nor critical, and are not intended for the discussion on genres or historical films. Nor they are linguistic in the sense in which cinema is conceived of as a language. According to Deleuze, "The cinema seems to us to be a composition of images and of signs, that is a pre-verbal, intelligible content *(pure semiotics)*, whilst semiology of a linguistic inspiration abolishes the image and tends to dispense with the sign. What we

call *cinematographic concepts* are therefore the types of images and the signs which correspond to each type"[49]. The second connection lies in the interest in the relation between time and image, in which the specific connection between Deleuze and Benjamin is that both of them draw thoughts concerning time and memory from Henri Bergson's philosophy, especially from *Matière et mémorie*.

Secondly, my object of viewing is Chris Marker's short-film, *La Jetée*. Additionally, I make some remarks on *Twelve Monkeys*, which is a film inspired by Marker's script. Basically, the temporal cycles of these two films remain similar, although the time-experience is expressed in almost contrasting way, as I shall show during the analysis. Further connecting issues in these films are, for instance, the importance of the memory-image, the idea of the global catastrophe and its consequences for humans, as well as the experiment of send-ing the protagonist backwards in time. It is perhaps important to stress from the beginning, that my analysis does not concern the technological structure of the film, nor does it rely on the canon of film-theories. Instead, my point of departure is primarily philosophical, as it reflects the nature of temporality in the cinematographic images and the image-concepts discussed above.

The philosophical query of the distinction between images (consciousness) and movement (space) became, as Deleuze mentions, a confrontation of materialism and idealism. Basically, Bergson and Husserl undertook this task at about the same time. Still, neither of them, and only a few phenomenologists during the beginning of this century referred seriously to cinema as their reflection on images. Bergson is explicitly critical and Husserl never mentions cinema at all. Only Merleau-Ponty attempts a confrontation between cinema and phenomenology, but he also views cinema ambiguously[50]. Although Benjamin discusses cinema broadly as both a political and a social phenomenon, he does not concentrate on the cinematographic images as a specific object of analysis. He also discusses the perception and time-factor, which are both included in viewing of a film, but he does not specify the relation between cinematographic image and time. However, here, I have combined Benjamin's remarks of cinema with his specific image-concepts that I see as fruitful in discussing the cinema from a philosophical viewpoint.

If one tries to follow Benjamin's dictum as "to read what has not been written", it could be practised in this specific case by reading the cinematographic images including sound, vision, and especially the temporal 'signs' that correspond to them. When the 'reading' of a film is concerned, one should simultaneously decipher both the non-sensuous and the sensuous meanings, the invisible connections and similarities (cf. 1933a: 209). The reading additionally demands that the viewer finds an active position in interconnecting the temporal reflections of the image. In this sense, the reading also means production of the meanings through the translation of the similarities and experiences into the text. The whole filmic material then becomes approached as being full of different levels and contents, interruptions and re-readings, which add further layers to the logistic-linear idea of reading, and it liberates the viewer/interpreter of the film from the pre-restricted theoretical frames[51].

This viewing without pre-set centres or temporal boundaries, characterises

the Image-space emerging during the perception. Deleuze stresses that it is necessary to move towards the limit, to create limits of 'before the film and after it', to pass into the film and to grasp in its character the limit that the viewer steps over in order to enter the film and leave it, and to enter into the fiction as into the present which is inseparable from its before and after. This is the aim of *cinema vérité*, influenced by Vertov's conception of the film-truth. The direct cinema requires the achievement of the direct presentation of time, and as I shall 'read' Marker's film in the following, as both belonging to the *cinema vérité* and detaching from it, in an attempt to describe the overcoming of the 'real time' experience[52].

1.1. On Chris Marker

Christian Francois Bouche-Villeneuve was born in Neuilly sur Seine on 29.7.1921[53]. He is, in addition to being a director and screenwriter, a novelist, poet, playwriter and journalist. He formed the SLON film co-operative (*Société pour le lancement des oeuvres nouvelles*, 1967) which is one of the leading political film co-operatives still operating in France. At the 1961 Berlin Festival for *Description d'un combat*, he was the recipient of the Golden Bear, and he also received the International Critics Prize, for *Le Joli Mai* in 1963.

Marker's movies have taken the form of personal essays, combined with the genre of documentaries. He began his carrier by writing poems, essays and translations, and he also worked as a journalist. He founded the *Edition du Seuil's petit planete series,* which is series of books generally photographed and each devoted to a particular country, combining subjective experiences and historical fact. Marker writes his films himself and he is also the cinematographer in many of them. The films contain verbal and visual images with philosophical speculation and erudition. The commentaries he creates to accompany the film-images come close to streams of consciousness and they can be very poetic. The poetry of the text combines with rather subjective seeing and hearing experiences.

When World War II broke out, Marker was a philosophy student, and he fought with the resistance under the German occupation. The philosophical background apparent in many of his films, for instance the script of *La Jetée* follows the lines of French philosophical tradition. It especially draws from the philosophy of memory and time, which are central issues in works from Henri Bergson to Marcel Proust, and in the *noveau roman*. The issues of memory combine Marker's work to films dealing with specific view on temporality, like Hitchcock's *Vertigo* or Resnais' *Je t'aime je t'aime*. After the war, Marker joined the staff of *Esprit* journal, where he wrote political commentaries, poems, articles and film reviews. He formed the so called Left Bank Group of New Wave French directors together with director Alain Resnais, novelist Jean Cayrol and co-editor Henri Colpi, all of whom often contributed to each others films[54].

In 1952, Marker made his first full-length 16 mm movie *Olympia 52*, about the Helsinki Olympic games. The next year he made a humanistic study of

African art and its decline under colonialism, which already sketched one central topic in his film, the question of a man as the 'master of the world'. In 1955 he worked on two films, the first one being a film about Nazi death camps, *Nuit et brouillard* (*Night and Fog*, directed by Resnais) of which he was assistant director, and the second, the short film essay, *Sunday in Peking*, which he made with Armand Gatti after a visit to China. *The Koumiko mystery* (1965) refers to the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, but is actually the story of a woman, Koumiko Moroaka, who presents her city (Tokyo), her country, and the Far East as a whole.

Marker is specially interested in transitional societies, in which it is made apparent that "life is the process of becoming history". The films and documentaries that Marker makes are not only representations of these chosen places, they also represent the cultures of those places. The *Lettre de Sibérie* (1958) is a kind of synthesis of his methods. The film is situated between the Middle-Ages and the 21st century, between the earth and the moon, between humiliation and happiness. It rejects social realism and shows its ambivalence towards technological progress in Siberia. In 1967, Marker organised a collective project to protest America's involvement with Vietnam, with segments contributed by Resnais, Godard, Joris Ivens, Claude Lelouch, William Klein, Agnes Varda and Michele Ray. The film is called *Loin du Vietnam*, and it represented a collection of approaches to political film making. His own political analysis is additionally shown in the four-hour montage film, *Le fond de l'air est rouge* (*The Base of the Air is Red*, 1977).

Since 1973 Marker had been working with Chilean refugees, on whom he based the collective film *La spirale* (1975). The film, *The battle of 10 millions*, in co-operation with Valerie Mayoux, centers on the failure of the 1970 Cuban sugar group, and is a dialectic of two different Castro-speeches, whereas *La Spirale* is a two and a half-hour documentary analysis of events in Chile surrounding the election of Salvador Allende. Marker's preoccupation with memory, as surfacing the constant movement between past and present, is generally present in his films. In its opening scene, *The Base of the Air is Red* shows the 'Odessa steps' massacre from Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*, which is actually an ironic commentary on the power of image, since the massacre in the form in which he describes it, was Eisenstein's own creation. This film was the subject of much critical acclaim, in part due to the fact that it focused on the post 1968 generation, yet still examined Marker's 'own' generation. As a result of this temporal shift, the historical panorama laid out in the film was unconcerned with some of the issues that had marked the New Left since around 1970, such as the feminist movement, sexual liberation or ecological questions.

In the late 1970's Marker travelled to Japan, a trip that resulted in the photo-films *Les depays* and *Sans Soleil*, 1982. *Sans Soleil* reached a broader audience than any of Marker's previous films, and it received the British Film Institute award in 1983. Both of the films play with the juxtaposing image and commentary. Images do not illustrate the text, nor does the text comment on the images, one has to take them in 'disorder'. But the intercuts are not limited to Japan, there are other intercuts, such as stills from Hitchcock's *Vertigo*. For

Marker, the Vertigo is the only film "capable of portraying impossible memory, insane memory." The short scene from *Vertigo* is also included in *La Jetée*, in which the intercut represents the Man looking at the trunk of a redwood tree. He says: "This is where I come from", and he points beyond the tree. In *Vertigo,* Madelaine shows the temporal spiral she imagines, or she pretends to be within, confusing the time of her own birth and the life of her imagined alter ego. In *La Jetée*, the spiral and madness connect to the inner temporal structure of the film.

Recently, Marker has made portraits and documents on, for instance Akira Kurasawa, Christo, Tarkowsky and Simone Signoret. His latest film is *Le Tombeux d'Alexandre* (*The Last Bolshevik*, 1993), that was prompted by Alexander Medvedkin's death.

1.2. La Jetée[55]

The special character of the "photo roman" is in between still photos and moving images; the time stops and it is underlined as still time in every photo and series of photos. Besides one moment in the middle of the film when the sleeping girl suddenly opens her eyes as she awakes, *La Jetée* consists entirely of still photographs by Jean Chiabaud, and is edited using technique of a comic strip, linked by commentary and music.

The film is spatially set in the Paris of the future, after its ruin by World War III. After the war, the survivors had gone underground because of the radioactivity of the air. One of the survivors finds himself obsessed with a distant memory of the Orly airport. This memory-image had carried him through the war, and eventually would be his fate. Distantly, he associates with the image of a woman's face and a man's death. In order to rescue the surviving people from the horrors of the time, scientists experimented with ways to cross temporal limits. For a reason not disclosed in the film, redemption was to be found in the past, therefore, the solution would be to travel back in time. Because of his strong memory-image the Man manages to overcome time and contact the Woman whose face haunts him. Finally upon his return to Orly, he discovers that the death he seems to recall is his own[56].

If conceived as a story, the film breaks with most aspects from the idea of continuous narrative. As I mentioned, it is Marker's sole fiction film, although this 'fiction' crosses many film-genres. It has elements of silent film, science fiction, as well as the 'new wave' in French cinema. The image sequences form one version of the story, which could theoretically be told also in reverse, or by changing the order of the various images. The role of the viewer becomes important in combining the film narrative, textual fragments and the series of images. This is one reason why I consider the film as being possible to approach as a Benjaminian Image-space, in which the position and critique of the viewer is essential to the actualisation of the present experience in the concrete moment of viewing the film. The idea is to join the experience of viewing the film with the interpretative or critical action. However, my approach to *La Jetée*

also includes critical questions, as my critique concerns Marker's approach to time from its end. Although his temporal idea and structure in the film are exceptional, it partly reverts the restrictive temporal limitations. In this, Marker gives time a deterministic character, which procedure is reminiscent of Heideggerian *Sein-zum-Tode*.

The opening scene of *The Jetty* is reconstructed in the final scene, and the narrative in-between is interestingly bound to these two scenes. The narrative includes a kind of mystery of the little Boy's eyes, viewing of events, facing himself as an adult, and facing the scene that becomes central in his life. The movement is bound with the relation to time, since the links between various dimensions of time are made on top of each other, and the topic of the memory accentuated as the essential clue of the film. At the same time the silent flow of the images in the film is somehow meditative and compact, showing close-ups of faces and their expressions.

2. "ORLY, SUNDAY. PARENTS USED TO TAKE THEIR CHILDREN THERE TO WATCH THE DEPARTING PLANES."[57]


Chris Marker Image Library

The frames of the Orly airport in the opening image metaphorizes time-experience, which is tied to its spatial limits and barriers; this represents the quantitative understanding of time which is possible to cross through technology. On the whole, I view Marker's first scenes as images of merging temporalities. *Firstly* they offer spatial frames from which to simultaneously approach to and detach from the common concept of the quantitative or spatial understanding of time. *Secondly*, they show the experience of time through three simultaneous present times: *Firstly*, the present that is described by the presence of the Boy (childhood in the present), *secondly*, the Woman's present (the memory in present): and *thirdly*, the Man's present (death in the present). The airport is the place, and the concrete link to time which, as belonging to Man's chronological history, opens and closes his sphere of experiences. In a sublime way, the beginning of *La Jetée* materialises the traditional philosophical contrast between the ideas of the external time that 'surrounds us' and the time 'inside of us'. This contrast set in the images, leads towards the inner phenomenological understanding of time, as the aim of the film is to overcome the temporal limits. This should be done by the human mind.

This key point of *La Jetée* is the one that *Twelve Monkeys* ignores. In 1995,

the idea of the film is shifted towards a more typical science-fiction genre mixed with American action film. Furthermore, in *Twelve Monkeys*, the major element in attempting to 'overcome' the limits of time is technology and not human mind. Ironically, in this sense it goes back to the temporal-spatial setting, from which Marker's film detaches itself. In *Twelve Monkeys*, the human memory is not conceived of as inner, but rather as an outer 'reality', which is represented through magnetophones, telescreens and news-images; the memory-space itself appears empty, and only the external impulses make it vivid. In contrast, Marker's film shows how from the blackness of the memory-space emerges life images, which are signified as memories.

The scene that *happened* at the Orly airport is included in the mystery of the film, which is also the core of its temporal thematic. Generally, Marker's film includes the idea of the 'recollection-image'[58], which is the image that includes a memory that is searched for throughout entire course of the film. The meaning of the events will be disclosed 'years later', at the same place and in the same 'present', as the Orly airport becomes a meeting point of the chronological and cairological present. 'The Man' protagonist, who carries the memory-image and later actualises it, was never named. This makes the story anonymous, the story of anyone, but at the same time it is the story about the Man whom Marker characterises in temporal terms, which are the terms of his memory and childhood. Yet, the protagonist simultaneously experiences and questions this memory, which is his identity.

The Man is a dualistic-figure who exists simultaneously as the little Boy, observing the events on the Sunday afternoon, and as the actor of the scene that the child was 'bound to remember'. The childhood image was the starting point, as the opening line of the film is: *"This is the story of a man, marked by an image from his childhood"*. The temporality is chrystallised into this figure of the Man that is the Boy and the falling body at the same time.

"Later, he knew he had seen a man die". Death opens some of the truth content of the film, through the crystallisation of past, present and future. The actual act of the Man falling is only indirectly referred to by the oral narrator of the film. However, the text-fragments of the film, as they are kept separate from the image-narrative in a way which mimics the early silent films, also add another dimension to the story. This is the dimension in which it becomes possible for the viewer to step into the Image-space and uncover some of the continuity and associations in the film. The Image-space emerges in reflection with the images, the narrator and the viewer, and results in the combination of the images and the script into a 'reasonable ' story. However, this is also an example that stresses the possibilities embedded in the filmic images, and which simultaneously conserves the element of rupture in-between images themselves and between images and the text.

Death signifies time coming to its end. As the filmic action is shown indirectly through the surprised and scared expressions of the faces of unknown people, the main moment of death does not seem meaningful in itself. What is more meaningful are the beginning and the end of the temporal journey, in which Marker leads the audience into a limit-situation. This means that death

also signifies the initiative temporal meaning of the film. The death is not the end, but rather it is a turn towards the temporal 'limit-space' of the film, which happens between two deaths of the same person and leads outside of the course of the destructive Chronos.

The beginning of the temporal cycles of the film are characterised by the experience of seeing[59]. The eyes of the little Boy become central as they witness the events that go on to become memories. Also, an interesting detail in the later time-travelling sequences is, that the Man's eyes are the main channel in crossing time. This marks the element of time as being characterised and achieved mainly through visual means. This view is reminiscent of Benjamin's idea of the images as offering a visual passage to the understanding of time and memory (1940: V). The event that the Boy sees, is recognised very fluently in his consciousness. The moment and the image of the Woman, comes forth only after the protagonist succeeds in penetrating the solid structures of his memory in the later experiment. This scene is an experience that becomes buried deep in his mind. In the Benjaminian-Proustian interpretation, this experience finds a space in *mémoire involontaire*.

The other main character of the film is introduced by the meditative close-up of the face of a Woman. In the first image, her face shows the mixture of a dream, contemplation and thinking[60]. Her eyes are looking somewhere, but they are not extremely focused, as her attention is turned towards the inner world. The Woman's face is in-between the present and the past, obviously in a space of her memory. From the temporal perspective, it is interesting that the Woman is dreaming and remembering at the same time as she herself becomes the object of memory, before the action itself occurs, or perhaps before the action is repeated in front of her eyes.

3. "NOTHING SORTS OUT MEMORIES FROM ORDINARY MOMENTS."

As the Woman's face becomes signified by the Man's memory, it transforms into a moment that will be described only via the Man's experiences, in the search for the origins of this memory. The action of reliving the memory, changes the Man's entire present. The close-up of the Woman representing the memory, also has an interesting connection to Marker's personal history, which he writes about in his short essay, *The Rest is Silent* (1995). Marker tells about the close-up that haunted him through the years, namely, his first experience of seeing Dreyer's *Joan d'Arc* at the age of seven (around the age of the Boy in *La Jetée*). He later came to understand that this perceptual experience was similar to 'falling in love' with the face of Simone Genevoix, which was reproduced on the screen.

Marker's text reveals his bright insight on the difference between memorised time and time that is only passing by. Its insight lies in its simplicity: *"Nothing sorts out memories from ordinary moments. Later on they do claim remembrance when they show their scars"*. Through this text-fragment, he emphasises the temporal distance between ordinary moments and memories. His main insight is that the contemporary time consists on events, images, thoughts and memories, which are signified as primarily 'ordinary moments', after which some of these moments become memories, and others pass by unnoticed. Remembering a certain moment is always unique, since it reveals something of its essential temporal character. The uniqueness is constituted by the image of the person experiencing the memory, which brings together the subject, thoughts, dreams and memories, all of which are waiting to be opened in the right moment, which might be that of the intelligibility.

In *La Jetée*, the idea of external time, or the universal time, vanishes. What, then, is the component that makes the distinction between moments and memories? If this query is approached from Marker's point of view, there does

not seem to be any reason in the present itself, which would make some moments appear as more relevant than others. The memory emerges during the temporal distance between the present and its memory, and this time-span constitutes the reason for the memory.

Following Benjamin, the distinguishing factor between the present and its memory or other moments, is embedded in the art of experience. It is already well-known that Benjamin discusses the topic of memory through concepts of involuntary and voluntary memory *(mémoire involontaire, mémoire volontaire)*, which are derived from Marcel Proust and Henri Bergson[61]. However, his concept of aura also refers to the past, and is materialised in both object and memories, and, according to following Benjamin, is "rooted in the childhood". In the letter to Theodor Adorno, Benjamin refers both to his theory of experience as it derives from the memory of his childhood, and to his thought on *aura,* as it is related to a "forgotten human" (*vergessenes Menschliches*, cf. Br. 848-849).

As Marker formulates his idea of the memory-image as referring to the future *(Later on do they claim remembrance...)* Benjamin approaches the memory from the present towards the past. Still, the combining factor between them is the assumption of the heterogeneity of the present time, and the necessity of capturing the present images. In *Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire*, Benjamin counter-poses the concepts of aura which preserves the forgotten aspect of memory, and shock-experience. He relates the question to a contradiction between experience as a uniform and continuous multiplicity of knowledge, and a scattered, "all-too-modern sensation" (*Erlebnis,* 1939b: 615-618). In an *Erlebnis,* the question of experience is *the loss* of experience as opposed to the emergence of the memory, as he adapts the idea of *Erlebnis* to imply that the connection to events is more scattered and transitory than in an experience.

According to Benjamin, when the past is seen as crystallised into the moment – into a dialectical image – it also becomes part of the *mémoire involontaire.* The involuntary memory offers a possible base for an experience of individuals, each time depending on the singularity as it relates to the perception/experience at that specific time. As the image is supposed to be conserved in the *unwillkürliche Erinnerung (mémoire involontaire)*, Benjamin also describes it as the unconscious memory of mankind. Remembrance is conceived of as a form of an Image-space that is not ordered via the rational course of thinking. The *mémoire involontaire* is not a course of memory, but an image[62]. If the elements of The Jetty are interpreted through this idea, the face, which is embedded in the Man's consciousness, is the chrystallised sign that emerges from the mémoire involontaire. It seems that this art of remembrance is impossible to reach through the act of 'voluntary' thinking.

The remembrance of the past that is included in people's world of experience is the mémoire involontaire, and the experience becomes its opposite in a *mémoire volontaire.* As the *memoire volontaire* is constructed of *Erlebnisse,* it means a contingent and non-integrated way of experiencing, in which the intellectual or rational memory scatters. In these terms, I interpret the diegetic course of *La Jetée* by bringing aspects of the *mémoire involontaire* into the

mémoire volontaire. In other words, it brings the unconscious and almost forgotten images of the past into the present consciousness, which is, however, in danger to scatter into a multiplicity. The film journeys to the temporal origins, and encompasses their redefinition over its course. Still, the journey not only actualises these images, it also shows the existence and the recovery of the sphere of the *mémoire involontaire*.

4. "AND SOMETIME AFTER CAME THE DESTRUCTION OF PARIS."


Chris Marker Image Library

The image of the destroyed Paris presents the contrast between the technological progress-vision from the beginning of the film and the sudden catastrophe embedded in this progress. The imaginary World War III has turned Paris into city in ruins. This vision is actually reminiscent of the catastrophic images of the World War II which thus familiarises the images of war, temporally relates rather backwards than forwards. The destruction might also symbolise the mental regression and the pessimism of the cultural scene of post-war Europe.

Catastrophe can be conceived of as the end of an old era of history. This is quite a repetitive image in films dealing with that time, as the old, traditional understanding of time has to be scattered in order to be able to start the new period. The catastrophe also symbolises the commencement of a new epoch, as well as exhibits the desire to destroy the old epoch. Following the narrative of *La Jetée*, there is also a possibility of visualising the catastrophe as a route towards a new mental era, which would have the ability to overcome the limitations and restrictions of time, if one were to survive it. Still, as Marker visualises it, this era is doomed from the beginning, as he emphasises the degeneration of the world, as 'the conquerors' (who happen to be Germans) *"stood guard of the kingdom of Rats"*.

In the destruction of Paris: *"Many died. Some believed themselves to be victors. Others were taken prisoners"*. The scene after the destruction shows the survivors in a situation, which is only an extended awaiting for the arrival of death. The place where they are settled are caves *"beneath Chaillot, in an underground network of galleries Paris was uninhabitable, riddled with radioactivity"*. This shelter of dark caves creates the possibility to conduct an experiment with the human mind and its temporality. The space is illustrated as the underground, and as a temporal space it is metaphorical for the process of 'going backwards' towards pre-historic times, in which caves offered the only possibility for human survival. But this is not in the jungle, and the dangers are caused by humans themselves. In *Twelve Monkeys*, the space after the destruction is reminiscent of that in *La Jetée*, as the people are living underground because of the virus that has destroyed 99 percent of the earth's population. The catastrophe manifests itself as human medicine and chemistry, as the virus is passed from animals to people. The laboratory where the survivors work is modern but very dark, and there is no fresh air because of its contamination. The catastrophe results from an 'error' that might occur in any post-modern scientific era.

Marker uses spatial metaphors to describe time and its changes. However, he does not metaphorically describe how to 'move' in time in an external sense, but rather in the sense of the internal time experience. On this he presents, for example, an image of a tunnel which grows into a montage crossing a man's head. In Gilliam's film, the way in which to cross temporal limits is also visible, as the experimenter, 'James Cole', is sent through the 'time-space' in a capsule. In contrast to *La Jetée,* his time travel is mainly physical, not mental.

The radioactivity and its consequences after World War III signify the further temporal levels in Marker's conceptualisation of the ideas of memory and death. This occurs on global level, as it includes the possibility of destruction and survival. The views of a destruction offer multiple possibilities of working within time. They are, for instance, the experience of the basic contingency of the current era, finding possibilities to act within it, or seeing it as an outcome of industrial dynamics in the continuity of capitalism, its transformation or disruption. Yet, the new era is characterised here by the dark under-ground space, in which the prisoners are the targets of experiments. The normal outcome of these experiments was signified by death, madness or disappointment. The images of degeneration are shown, for instance, as the face of a madman through a strongly contrasted image reminiscent of a skull.

In searching for an outcome of the situation, the human brain becomes the material for an experiment. As the story tells, the head experimentor was not reminiscent of Dr. Frankenstein, nor was he an incarnation of the mad scientist Dr. Rotzwang from Lang's *Metropolis.* The experimentor is presented as having serene face, and the text complements the close-up of his face, as he describes that the human race is doomed, and that the only link to survival was through time. The reason for the Man's participation in the experiment is specifically implanted in his memory-image, and his task is to also recollect the other ima-

ges of his childhood and the layers of his past. The Man is now signified by post-catastrophic life, and he is bound between his memories and present experiences, since his private remembrance becomes the material what the present 'needs' in order to survive. The experiments attempt to make memory-images for collective use, to offer possibilities of finding ways out of the haunted present. Here, the elements of public and private merge, as the "camp police spied even on dreams".

5. "IF THEY WERE ABLE TO CONCEIVE OR TO DREAM ANOTHER TIME, PERHAPS THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO LIVE IN IT."

Benjamin's claim of the loss of the lived experience in modernity leads to the thought that the way to receive renewed 'control' of human subjectivity, is through the redemption *(Rettung)* of past experiences[63]. As I have shown over the course of my interpretation, this redemption was not intended to remain only a metaphysical or theological idea, but was outlined by Benjamin as also shifting towards politics, as an idea that forced immediate action in the present. This could lead to the acquisition of a genuine basis of personal experience, or possibly the gaining of personal sovereignty in experience, which he claims to be lost in modernity[64]. In Marker, the comparison of these themes becomes interesting, while *"this was the aim of the experiments: to send emissaries into Time, to summon the Past and Future to the aid of the Present"*.

This issue of salvation connects Marker's and Benjamin's thought, since this salvation refers to the disruption in the course of time. In *The Jetty*, the material of the salvation was made up of the individuals, who were used as a substance or as various spheres of energy, and also as the emissaries who were sent into Time to aid the Present. The problem of crossing the time via mind was embedded in the structure of the mind itself, as it was seen as being able to cross temporal barriers. However, so far it had not been possible to return to the same time that one had left as a child without being devastated: *"the shock of moving in time would be too great"*. Yet, Marker insists to present that the time and the 'boundaries of time', are mainly a human construction. The ability to re-construct or even to cross the boundaries has to be embedded in the mind. But, as becomes clear at the end of the film, moving turned out to be impossible. This impossibility marks an ambiguity in Marker's film, and implies the rea-

son why the setting has to be destroyed with the death of the Man. In *Twelve Monkeys*, this Cartesian problem is solved simply by excluding the mind, which marginalises the importance of the memory and mental images. This also reduces its philosophical interest, and turns it into more of a visual attraction.

Henri Bergson notes, in accordance with the concept of 'lived time' that we are constantly creating ourselves. Bergson relates time to the questions of identity and its re-creation, as it is a progressive growth of the absolute, and in the evolution of things a continual invention of forms ever new[65]. Bergson's 'lived time' is reminiscent of Kant's idea of the 'intuition of time', as it is not only something conceptualised, but is a concrete feeling or a state of mind, which is reminiscent of the consciousness itself. If the Man in *The Jetty* is considered in Bergsonian terms as doomed to his image of the past, this memory-image constructs his identity. However, the Man should attempt to free himself from this mental image of the past, as the lived experience as a persistent memory prohibits his existence in the present. To liberate himself, means confronting this image, an idea that is also used as a psychoanalytic method of working with the personal past, in order to confront the unconscious in psychic states.

Ruins-fragments, as they are presented in the image of the destroyed Paris, are also well-known topic of baroque allegory. They symbolise the world as having fallen into various pieces and fragments, as the old world-image is scattered. For instance, Sigmund Freud's analysis of Wilhelm Jensen's novel *Gradiva* approaches the catastrophic image from another angle, but the issue that connects it to Marker's film is the idea of temporality, which is expressed through the catastrophe. According to Freud, the catastrophe is linked to the topic of the scattering of the limit between conscious and unconscious, and is also described by the scattered buildings and the chaos[66].

The ideas of space and destruction play a central role in *Gradiva,* as its main scene happens in Pompeii. Freud's attachment to Pompeii was already established as he visited the city in 1902 and became fascinated by the analogy between the *historical destiny* of Pompeii and the *mental events.* Actually, the view of the destroyed city can be used effectively both towards the past and the future in historical and mental meaning. This might be an essential link to the temporality of mental time consciousness, illustrated in Marker's image of destroyed Paris: in this case it is not as an end but a beginning of the new epoch. In the analysis of *Gradiva,* time is seen as 'frozen', since Freud uses memory as a frozen space, reminiscent of the ruins of Pompeii. He raises the question of repressed memory-images of childhood and of how the man in the interpreted Jensen's story on *Gradiva,* comes to realise the issues he has repressed in the course of his life.

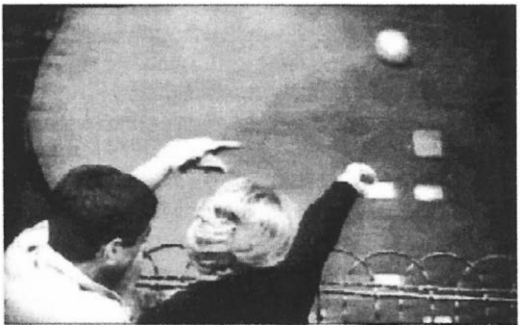
In both Marker's and Jensen's stories, the Man finds himself searching for a Woman from the ruins of something that has been destroyed. In the ruins, time is kept still. This frozen frame of destruction signifies a border-space between temporalities, firstly by the time in which the Man lives, and secondly, by what he experiences as mental time. The ruins symbolise a time-space, which becomes separated from the continuous idea of history and also adds an

accidental dimension to it.

The importance of the temporal trip is that the protagonist experiences something essential, when he comes back to the temporality of his own lifetime, which was unquestioned before this event. Both in *Gradiva* and *La Jetée*, the men are unable to go on living according to their earlier idea of life. Norbert Hanold decides to take a journey without destiny, which leads him to Pompeii. There he miraculously is confronted by the appearance of Gradiva, although he does not know, to which period of time she really belongs. In Jensen's Pompeii, something that was locked in the memory had been dug up and brought back to life. The memory, when it was frozen as in the ancient ruins now presents an allegoric image. And in both examples, the unfolding of the memory happens by going back to the very basic human experience of love as something essential, which, in the Bergsonian sense, leads the person into the depths of his or her soul, to unlock the doors; the experience goes through the process of burial, and then discovery.

In *La Jetée*, the Man, after reaching his memory-image, begins zigzagging in-between the past and his present. Both examples move in-between specific moments, apart from temporal continuity or the linear idea of the temporal course. In the film, Man's horizon of expectation shrinks, because, returning to the 'time of his memories', he is conscious that catastrophe lies ahead, and this causes the future to appear as linearly finite. The way of visualising the future is shown through the possibility of widening the Man's own horizon of expectations towards the future, which in terms of the film would mean the opportunity to save himself[67].

6. CROSSING TIME


Chris Marker Image Library

To find an escape from the Chronos that has become too determined, means searching for alternate views on time. Here an alternative temporal understanding could require us to ask, whether 'we' are prisoners of time, or if we are capable of discovering ways of freeing ourselves from the persistent images of the *Sein zum Tode*, which could be seen as paralysing the freedom of the individual action. The critique on the Chronos also concerns the ancient image of the destructive or determinate force of time, which follows us particularly through the 20th century. The way of overcoming the Chronos, require us to ask, for instance, *how* time could be conceived of as a creative factor, as opening a *Spielraum,* a field of action and experience within the temporal limits? This question is one further step towards thematizing the aspect of the Kairos as a personal opportunity to confuse the frames of collective consciousness of time.

The crossing of the Chronos in *La Jetée* is described through the moments, in which the Man begins to achieve mental images of the past, and the past becomes for Marker the potential field in which to play with time. The moment when this occurs, could be interpreted in Deleuzian terms as offering the 'peaks of time'[68]. *"On the tenth day, images begin to ooze, like confessions"*. The transformation of the previous temporal experience is shown visually through images emerging from 'the memory'. The first 'peaks' that appear as images are those of birds, children and landscapes, which are emphasised by the question of how this temporal crossing is possible to visualise.

"Other images appear, merge, in that museum, which is perhaps that of his memory." The museum, as a space filled with documents of the past is also the metaphor for frozen memories. In Freud's interpretation on *Gradiva,* he characterised the hero as living an un-sexual life, where the female sex had been experienced by only through something made of marble or bronze, as the protagonist had barely paid attention to real women. The typical Freudian schema was to interpret sexuality as repressed and frozen, reminiscent of the ancient ruins or stones. The liberation was done in the space of destruction in the ruins of Pompeii. Marker represents similar frozen images in the 'memory museum' which is filled with statues of female torsos with or without heads. This might be a step forward in this new temporal universe, now, perhaps towards meeting a real-life woman. It also might signify Marker's ironical remark on memories, which are approached from the present as if they would be frozen into statues. In this sense, the discovery goes in the reverse direction than presented in Freud's interpretation.

The discontinuity of Marker's images is both real and potential in the text and images, as they could be moving in any direction of time. This adds another level of the story, the crossing into the Chronos time not only through a narrative, but also through the course of images and their reversal. Only the story-line of the narrator combines the meaning of images and text. If the narrative were to be changed, the images would still remain as they had been, and potentially present another story. Here, Marker's temporal *Spielraum* is insightful in terms of playing with the text and images, and in that it presents the narrative which is embedded in its own contingency.

The first part ends at the Orly airport. The image of Orly now appears as a destiny and motivation to 'move in time'. It is the place in which time both stands still, and moves forward. However, this time Orly is empty, reminiscent of the *Tatort* that Benjamin found in Atget's photographs (1936a: 360-361). The Man crosses the path of the Woman at Orly, sees her face in the car, and the experiment is over again. The interruptions that happen now gain meaning, and they begin to change something in the Man's temporality. Finally, he has proved the reality of the Woman, and he wishes to continuously visit his own past. This begins his personal madness that eventually becomes his destruction[69].

As the Man confronts the origins of his memories, the other part of the story begins: the love story. He recognises her, and the two individual temporalities slowly merge into one extended present. He recognises her, but the origin of the moment of recognition remains unclear[70]. However, finally he is able to go back and forth in time, and he can re-live a moment, whereas the Woman's time is represented as stable and passive. The Man catches the Woman suddenly on various occasions, and he appears like a ghost who interferes with her existence in the streets or parks, and she welcomes him as such. The couple begins to exist in a dateless world, where the temporality transfers from an individual towards a shared time. Yet, the Man exists in a double-temporality partly in his memory-images, partly in the experiment room. Their shared

moments are fragmentary, as the face and the presence of the Woman disappears and reappears. *"Time rolls back again, the moment returns (...). They are without memories, without plans (...). Time builds itself painlessly around them."*

Marker's text describes the experience of the present without quantifying or differentiating its elements with clocks or dates. This is exceptional, as the present-time is not the pre-supposed narrative present that proceeds via action, but, rather, it is constructed by fractures. After their meeting, the Man was 'able' to use his memory-image and to cross time; the time took the form of a subject, moving and spinning around the subjects. Here, the present is constructed with many layers, which constitute the core experience of time. The walks outside and the sudden disruption of the experiment, which draw the Man back again, connect the two present times through the memory-images. The course of the narrative temporality stagnate into a multi-dimensional present temporality.

The additional element that characterises the series of meetings, is the face of the Woman sleeping. Theoretically, it could include a further key to the story, signifying the possibility that the Woman could be dreaming the whole story. The dream-images also show, how throughout the whole film, the Woman is presented only through the memory-image of the Man. There is nothing characteristic of the identity of the Woman, on the contrary, she exists without identity, only as the object of the memory and perception. The activity of the Man versus the passivity of the Woman shows the decline towards more traditional story-lines in Marker's work. As the constructing temporality of the Man is dynamic because of the multi-level movement in the dimensions of time, the Woman is signified by her static and responsive being.

The oral narrator tells us that the characters do not share common memories, nor have they plans for the future. As the 'unspoken trust' grows between them, it implies that they exist apart of any common signs of linearity or chronology. The durability of time, if it is conceived of here in Bergsonian terms, is established without quantitative temporal signs or dates. As the time 'builds itself around them', they have no common history, nor do they have any expectations of the future. This reduction of quantitative time draws attention again to the pure experience of time, which means stepping out of the control of Chronos[71].

There are still two scenes that show the ideas of the enlarged temporality. The first one takes place in the front of the treetrunk, and the second, in the museum. *"As in a dream, he shows her a point beyond the tree, hears himself say, This is where I come from..."* The scene in front of the treetrunk is important for two reasons. Firstly, it characterises another temporal expression through the age lines of the tree, and also in terms of the spiral or circle, and secondly, it creates another interruptive element in Marker's film, implicitly borrowing the scene from Hitchcock's *Vertigo*. In *The Jetty*, the Man no longer knows the direction of his time, as *"he never knows whether he moves toward her, whether he is driven, whether he has made it up, or whether he is only dreaming"*. The various meetings illustrate the way in which there are different 'shifts' or 'layers' inside

a specific time, marked by the spirals of the treetrunk. Also, the layers reveal the 'spiral of time', which is included in the temporal structure throughout the film.

The final scene of their meeting explicitly describes that the 'frozen' time is their meeting in the natural history museum. The museum represents the timeless space that refers to the frozen moments of the past. Time is something which does not move forward, and instead is materialised in the historical animals and their collections. The visitors constantly change, bringing the element of variation into the static museum-space. In this sense time is both always the same and always different; contingent yet recurrent. The cycles of time are now materialised in evolution. Additionally, the museum is the place, in which something about the togetherness of the couple changes again. This is the realisation of love and emancipation, before their separation comes shortly after. The static faces turn to smiles. He looks at her and she looks at him, dreaming, sensual and happy; *"she too seems tamed"*[72].

7. "THERE WAS NO WAY TO ESCAPE TIME "

Remembering the already forgotten things of the past and actualising the experience of remembering through action, is something that Benjamin calls a practical memory *(ein praktisches Erinnern)*. The concept of practical memory combines the contemplative and the active moments of remembrance in an Image-space, comparable to the act of perception. As the Image-space leads to action, it replaces the theoretical character passive reception. In a similar manner, the practical memory combines the theoretical and practical aspects of remembering into a politics of memory. As parts of collections, objects that earlier had no meaning anything or that were seen as useless, are separated from their origins and from their functional or practical connections[73]. Here, the memory of the Man becomes actualised and practical, and this makes it also political, although the political components remain buried in the fiction.

After the obvious scene of happiness in the natural historical museum, the next step was to move into the Future. After this feeling of freedom, the possibility to cross the boundaries of temporality changed. As the new perspective towards the future is introduced to him, time finally gains direction. The move into the future takes a bit more effort than travelling to the past. As the means of travelling can no longer be the memory images, Marker offers a cartographic connection to the temporality, and the Man receives a map of orientation for his trip to the future. This comes to replace the memory images of moving in time. But the story of the actual relationship ends here. The decisive part of the time-travelling emerges, as the Man has to make a choice between different times.

In the future, *"others were waiting for him, it was a brief encounter... Obviously they rejected the scoriae of another time"*. The people of the future gave the Man the power unit to put the human industry back into motion. This implies that humanity had survived, and that the salvation-task of the Man in an external

sense was finished. Still, he was doomed to his own fate. The scientists had used his childhood images and his memory for collective purposes. Now he had lived his memory twice, which seemed to be one time too many. Instead of salvation, he waited for execution. He wanted to conserve the picture of his childhood and to go back to this Woman who was perhaps waiting for him. The important aspect in the temporal course of the film is that the Man does not want to go towards the promised land of the future, but he wants to return to the past. Was this the meaning of this 'regression', stagnation, or worse, the 'price' he had to pay for overcoming the limits of time?

The final scene at the Orly airport is constructed with the child, the face of the Woman and the Man. As the Man runs towards her, he learns the lesson: *"There was no way to escape time."* Now this time, once so smoothly building itself around the characters, is closing in around him. The spiral had just reached the point at which 'his time' had come to an end. The time of the others continued, or perhaps, everything started again, as it was included in the child's eyes, spinning all over again in an endless spiral?

Once again, he came to face the moment of his own death, which was included in the possessive image of his childhood. This 'dialectical image' characterises the personal experience, which leads to a situation of decision-making and also to the judgement of one's own possibilities. The temporal problem of judgements signifies the role of the subjective experience as being the basis of action. But what is actually leading his actions? I understand it as the image of *happiness,* which he searched for, and which he found in the time already passed by.

The future part of the image flashed with his desires, but the Man's dreams were not to be fulfilled in the future. This characterises an evidently temporal problematic, and the confrontation of that problem between the past and the future. The experience of the Now-time, which Marker describes amazingly accurately through the experience at Orly, was shown as 'intensified with the past experience' throughout the entire film. The aspect of the past is there to be remembered, and additionally, it is to be actively rescued from being buried in the forgotten. The horizon of expectations reaches from the past to the present, and then back to the past. In this expectation, the Man had to make his temporal tiger's leap, in order to combine the two fractures of his identity. In this he failed, since time turned out to be a final barrier that grew stronger than himself.

THE IMAGES OF TIME

The method of *La Jetée* is a photo-roman, which is made of combining photos and text. In a way it is an advanced form of the first avant-garde works of art, which combined images and text in the 1920's[74]. The avantgardian element in Marker's film is in the way in which it follows the method of these early combinations between text and images. Following Benjamin's thought, the viewer follows the directive given in the text in the same way as in the illustrated magazine[75]. The interplay of reading and viewing creates one layer of the 'meaning' of the story. But, as the viewer tends to follow instructions similarly to the viewing of a the film, the method of destroying the linearly proceeding flow in the course of images is an alienating factor in the story of *La Jetée*. The images might be 'read' in the way in which the narrative suggests, or as discussed above, there are also several other ways to imagine the connections between the images as well as to consider the meaning of the film. If the film is seen as a narrative, the act of reading it also includes interruptive elements. The Image-space is created at every point in which the rupture in the temporal chronology occurs, as Marker gives an example of the real experimental space *(Spielraum)* of the cinema.

Science fiction films have a common topic of playing with both the time between life and death and with the temporal barriers, through enlarging the field of action into possibilities of visualising a future time and space. *La Jetée* is not, however, a typical science-fiction film. It presents the idea of overcoming the restrictions of time, but not through technology. Instead, it visualises the potentiality of the mind to cross the limits of time as a result of the human ability to remember, dream and hope. This process, as the images merge into the present and lead to remembrance, in both, thought and action, represents the idea that I understand through Benjamin's concept of *Denkbild,* or Deleuze's *noosign;* the image that can go beyond itself into something which can only be thought.

In thinking about the 'eras' of Benjamin's cinema, *La Jetée* and *Twelve Monkeys*, they represent ways in which to conceive of the idea of temporality in the three different time periods. Naturally, these periods should not simply be seen as comparable with each other. Still, we continuously use different spheres to discuss time, from subjective to objective, quantitative to qualitative or from global and collective to individual and microcosmic ideas of time that are sometimes presented simultaneously. This causes us to question, whether the specific temporal differences are understood by the subjects or discussants themselves, and whether the conceptualisation of time has really changed? The two films (although my commentary on *Twelve Monkeys* remains fragmentary) present both their inner idea of time, described by the images, and represent the 'film-time' of their contemporary. The roughly thirty years between the films has changed much of the story, and although they belong to different genres of film-making, the images of time themselves represent the temporal transformation in viewing as well as in making films. If Benjamin's film-examples of the 1930's are included, then we have three eras with around 30 years between them, which provide material for speculating on the experience of time and film.

The technical development of cinema has generally transferred from silent film to talkie[76], from black and white towards modern colour and film technique, from an internal understanding of time towards an external understanding of time and space as action. Further, the experience and literature on time has changed from the time of Proust or Bergson, who constructed several nuances of temporal experience. The phenomenological approach, in which a film and its images remain in the memory as memory-images, merging in the dream and real images of the perceiving subject, could be described through the actualisation of the 'inner consciousness of time' in the film images[77]. The recollection in the 1990's film has transferred from internal memory into the external representation of memory by tele-screens and computers. This transformation shows that the whole existence of memory is now presented as scattered and materialised by various electric or magnetic means, and that the idea of 'time' has become non existent in itself. In fact, nothing like an internal memory even exists. 'Voice-mail' and recording are, as opposed to mental images, capable of crossing temporal dimensions. This implies the idea, that when the subjective time-consciousness has become objective, the barriers of time are also shown as concrete and physical.

I interpreted the basic ideas of *La Jetée* to be the way in which the memories of the childhood are carried with us throughout our entire lives, and how the thought of rescuing the present could happen through finding a passage to the past. The film questions the way in which our personal memories 'rule' our image of history and our approach to events on an individual level. It asks what we pick up as memories, as we experience the events of our lives, and what moments we never think about again. In fact, the past comes alive through the memory (the aspect of birth), and its deaths are not yet buried. This constructs the meaning of the present, and also provides the meaning we are looking for by digging into the past. If the issue of memory transfers to the

outer machinery and technology, as it is described in Gilliam's film, the memory-time becomes detached from the human's themselves. Naturally, this would have consequences, not only regarding the ability and creativeness to memorise, but also for the experience of the inner consciousness of time and the impacts on the construction of identity.

Marker edits the cinematographic images of time in a manner that was intended to reach the moment of the 'impossible'; in overcoming the temporal barriers. The various shifts of time could be distinguished, for instance, *firstly* as separating the technological time, which includes the shooting and editing of the film; *secondly* the structural time, which constitutes a temporal 'meta-level' from which to approach the film as a whole; and *thirdly*, the diegetic time. Also, Benjaminian inspired ideas of both the *Now-time*, which concentrates on selected moments in the temporal confrontation in film, and the *Image-space* which encompasses the entire event of the film, including the viewer, could be added to these temporal shifts.

The structural time of the film is 'in-between' the present and the past in a manner that achieves a 'chrystal image of time' in the Deleuzian interpretation. But it is actually more than this. As Deleuze's chrystal-image refers to the experience of the temporal 'double-face' of the present and the past, Marker adds another temporal dimension to it. Especially in the Orly-scenes, the present is included in a way that could be described following Fellini: "We are constructed in memory; we are simultaneously childhood, adolescent, old age and maturity."[78] In Marker, even the moment of death is included in this simultaneous memory thus making it actually the presentation of three instead of two simultaneous presents: that of the Woman, that of the child and that of the Man who dies.

It seems that modernity has fallen in love with death. In Marker, the death is reminiscent of the figure in the famous Baudelaire poem, *A une passante*, in which the Woman who Charles glances at in the crowd is dressed in black. Maybe she is death herself, as unattainable as she is in the moment that is already gone, when the poet is ready to reflect on the situation. And this 'being gone', which signifies the absence from the presence, or not-yet-being in the present, makes the death-figure so fascinating, whether it appears in poetry, film or photography. Yet, in *Twelve Monkeys*, a poetry of death is no longer existent. The death consists of action, slow-motion, shooting and blood. This means that the temptation and the period of the seduction of death are over, and the seen is the one we have seen once too much.

***

My critical questions regarding *La Jetée* are already partially outlined above. My basic critique concerns Marker's decision of remaining within temporal limits, presented by Death. He clearly presents the space of his 'film-thinking' as non-chronological and spiralled, in which the beginning and end points are bound together. However, instead of the determinacy film include potential openings, which are yet not realised. These are, for instance, in the treetrunk or the

museum sequence, as the temporal dimensions are multiply intertwined, which might offer interesting exits from the narrative.

If the memory is opened into another direction, it could be interpreted as the new recovery of the *mémoire involontaire*. On this basis, the 'new identity' could be constructed with aspects of the redefinition of the confrontation between voluntary and involuntary memory and could lead towards the sovereignty of action. This new mental era could be seen as using the ability to experience and memorise as its source, as the evident contingency of time could be mastered through individual sovereignty. Yet, the sovereignty of action is lost in Marker's film, and it does not exist at all in *Twelve Monkeys*. Any attempt to strengthen the personal time or unconsciousness, is doomed to insanity or destruction.

The third critique concerns the fact, that, although Marker includes fine images of the present and shows the layers of its experience, his present still remains in the frames of the passing section, in-between the past and the future. The outcome of this restriction of the present time is the impossibility to escape the time, similar to the lesson inscribed by the Chronos. In the same cinematic material, a new perspective could be embedded both in the present and in the course of time, by finding a free space for reflection of time parallel to its supposed chronological course. This is the reversibility of time. Instead of the determinate end, these options might be actualised and there could be the possibility of opening the 'present' anew in every situation of viewing the film.

The temporal structure of *La Jetée* ends up in cycles. In this sense, both the emergence of action and the moment of action were already predetermined, despite the peaks of time and the three-dimensional present. The Man's strive towards freedom in the story allowed him to catch the image of the past and resurrect it like the lost image of himself. His repetitive returning to the past finally caused an additional problem, choosing between the past and the future. However, and as already noted, the protagonist lacked the sovereignty of choice and action. In this sense, the analysis includes further questions to reflect on, such as how it would appear if the moments of the present, intensified through the (memory) images of the past, were actualised in the individual action? The possible redemption of the narrative is outlined in the film, but its solution remains the 'black and white' choice between good and evil, in which the bad is the mad scientist and his troupes, and the good is the protagonist who has helplessly fallen in love.

Altogether, Marker's images show an extensive material as a constellation of ideas which can be thematically reconstructed in further connection to each other and to the interrelation between the theoretical ideas of time and space. In a way, the film exists at the cross-roads of these ideas and their visualisation. Through Benjamin's vocabulary, the ideas could be pushed even further, as the Man's confrontation of his memory-images could be interpreted as a *dialectical image,* which is bound with the events at the Orly airport. In Benjamin, the present experience simultaneously means the creation of something new, a new era to come, or a new course of thinking after its dialectical standstill. The catastrophe is characterised as a break from the 'normal' course of events,

mixing their course and setting new rules. The Now-time includes the sphere that is on the border of history and 'nothingness'. This is actually a point which connects the past with the present, as the opening of a *new time*, which is not completely separate from a pre-existing experience, but not overly bound with it either.

Going backwards in history, the aspect of emphasising the new as a birth, is a well-known topic in Talmudic tradition, closely related to Benjamin and, for instance, Hannah Arendt[79]. Martin Buber writes, that *each person born into this world represents something new, something that did not exist before, something original and unique* [80]. This new opening, the possibility to gain another perspective in each interpretation creates the space for pure action. Action, which is conceived of as a new beginning without the burden of tradition, is seen as pure and momentous, as an *acte gratuite* [81]. History is described as a kind of recollection, "only the *actus purus* (pure action) of recollection itself, not the author, constitutes the unity of the text" (1929b: 311). Benjamin used the interplay between forgotten and remembered as a textual web of reality. In this case, the "pure action" is situated on a temporal borderline, as the action calls for something that is outside of the routine, a factor that is undetermined and non-teleological. At the same time, the action crates the perspective towards freedom by determining historical course.

The moment of the Now includes both its experience, which emerges as a point of contradiction of a specific past, and an equally specific present. At the same time, it is possible to deconstruct the already established historical image of the past. The meaning of this deconstruction, is to question the nature of tradition and traditionally (or commonly) understood facts as a given truth. This questioning opens further possibilities for temporal, political, philosophical or aesthetic experience through the moment of the Now. Also through the construction of the critical attitude towards the past, the present includes both the moment and site of the actuality of the past, as the past is contingent upon the actuality of the present (1940: V).

La Jetée, if analysed in these terms, shows the opposite view. The past, which is approached with the idea of rescuing the present, does not open a new perspective on it. Marker describes the future and the present as a catastrophe, but without a new perspective on them. In this context, time-travelling is understood as a changed view of time, without more specific questioning of history and its meaning[82]. The decisive actions are those made through moments of experience. The personal experience leads to an action, a situation that is impossible to judge from the outside. In *La Jetée*, the protagonist is faced with the situation of having to make a decision, of having to choose between the past and the future, because, as he already knows, the gates of present are already closed to him: "*...now he only waited to be liquidated with, somewhere inside him, the memory of a twice-lived fragment of time*". His present was contingent and it was the memory of the past that haunted him. In this, Markers 'synthesis' is, that there is no way to escape time.

But there also exists the non-synthesis. If we would further characterise the being in the situation of the *Now-time*, we could conceptualise the Now-Being

(Jetztsein), which is the parallel of 'being awake' *(Wachsein):* "In ihr *(Jetztsein der Jetztzeit, kl)* wäre von der zunehmenden Verdichtung (...) der Wirklichkeit zu sprechen, in der alles Vergangene zu seiner Zeit einen höheren Aktualitätsgrad als im Augenblick seines Existierens erhalten kann." (PW: 495) In the Now-being, time undergoes a moment of intensification, as the *Wachsein* emerges from the transformation from remembrance *(Erinnerung)* to awakening *(Erwachen).* Benjamin argues that remembrance reaches and works with the 'facts' of past, but that it alone is not sufficient enough to actualise them, although, it is the factor important in creating the chain of tradition[83]. I perceive this idea of actualisation as the possible outcome of Marker's film. In Benjamin, only the awakening liberates the Now-Being from its bondage to past time, and in this place could Benjaminian answer to the dilemma be found[84].

Here, the *Copernican change* might happen from the historical and dreaming state of being towards the awareness of the present. When Marker thematizes the dialectical side of the Man approaching his dreams, the Benjaminian side of the coin turns the dreams to the awakening. In completing the process of viewing the film, emerges a critical constellation of times, in which Marker's and Benjamin's present times inspire a collision between texts, images and the view-er's experience. The viewing, if the temporal boundaries are reduced, characterises the completed Image-space of perception. The viewer moves towards the limits of time, and passes them with the reflection on the images, leaving the film after entering into the fiction as if entering into a form of the present that is inseparable from its before and after.

IV
NOW-TIME / IMAGE-SPACE

The discussion raised during the 1980's, intending to bring the eras of politics, history and philosophy to a close1, obviously outlines a turn with regard to what the previous historical periods mean to the approaching end of this Millennium. Yet, the discussion on both the ends of the eras and the repetitive and no longer creative characterisation of post phenomenon, from philosophy to photography, also require a change in perspective, if the present is to no longer be defined simply as an extension of the past. The end of modernity was also followed and also inspired, for instance, by Lyotard's *The postmodern condition*, through the discussion on the *death* of philosophical metanarratives. What was common to these narratives was that their temporal legitimisation was displaced into the *future,* following the idea of scientific or historical progress established especially during the 19th century. As the future and its course began to be questioned, the narratives started to lose their power[2].

However, the disruption in historical continuity has constantly been present throughout the course of 'modernity' itself. Recent claims have also been made, for instance by Reiner Ansén's *Zeitlichkeit und Politik*, that the idea of the political was already embedded in *temporality,* by classics political theorists, such as Plato, Hobbes and Rousseau[3]. If we agree with this thought, the transformations in historical and political cultures are also to be considered as reflections on changes in our temporal conceptions, and not only changes of historical periods. Due to its totalising character, the whole query on periodization is problematic, especially with regard to the period of modernity, as, for instance, Peter Osborne remarks in his *Politics of Time*. Following him further, it is essential not only to criticise this totality but also to offer a dialogue, in which to debate its forms[4]. This debate can, however, only begin in the present.

NOW-TIME

In reading Benjamin, it has been proven that there are in fact ways of discussing time and historical periods separately from this most obvious chronological and linear perspective. The modern is not necessarily, modifying

Benjamin, only a historical epoch, but it is also an *energy*. The Now is an essential point of catching this energy and is embedded in every perception and individual experience of it. If the history and its counterpart of the present time are conceived of as a confrontation between Now and Then, the meaning of the canonical periodization of history and the causality of action fall apart. The tautological self-determination at the end of the 20th century, which should have a more distinguished historical self-consciousness than ever before, deserves a true transformation. But when and how? The epoch, which is understood as a critique, contra or continuous tail of 'modernity', is struggling with its self-confidence; in the ideas of the speeding temporal course and meaninglessness of its own time, it exists on the edge of losing it.

It is impossible to totalize Benjamin's concept of time. The energy of modernity implies a turn towards present awareness, mediated through documents of time, which range from texts to images. This might give an impulse to unfold the seeds, embedded in the ongoing discussion on *ends* or *posts*, into a deeper elaboration of their own meaning. This requires the explosion of the hell of modernity and the eternal recurrence of the post. Benjamin's temporalization of politics, history and art goes in dualistic directions, firstly, comprehending time through its horizontal course, which is characterised by the discursive thinking and through the idea of language; and secondly, as vertical or intermittent idea, which is the course of associations, images, the imaginary and intuition. Benjamin's way of writing combines these two directions in punctional or sequential way. The rhythm of these thoughts characterise the plurality of temporal constellations, opened for our own, or any coming reflections.

The main issue of this work has been to construct an approach to Benjamin's philosophy of time, history and art, beginning with the idea of the temporalization of politics. This work has resulted in the construction of cairological time, through three main critiques:

I The first critique concerns the understanding of time exclusively as linearly proceeding. As opposed to the linear approach, Benjamin's perspective to historical time is constructed through the moments of temporal standstill, which include the monadic view on history, the reversed view on historical dialectics, and the constructivist approach to writing and mediating historical experiences. The central ideas leading up to this are, the thematization of truth and knowledge as temporal instead of timeless, and the emphasis on individual acknowledgement in accordance with the present experience. Benjamin draws from the ideas of immediate truth, in which immediacy is conceived of as the *moment of knowledge*. The immediacy is provided with the concept of the past, and is made visible through the facts, documents, or images of the past that are constituted in the reflective action with the experience of the present.

The *temporalization of politics*, inspired by Benjamin's *Copernican change,* means the re-reading and re-contextualisation of historical or artistic events from the viewpoint of the present. This recreates not only the perspective towards the past, but also towards the present. In my work, I have also discus-

sed Koselleck's idea of the temporalization of history *(Verzeitlichung der Geschichte)*, which he characterises as 'saddletime' *(Sattlezeit)*, as occurring around 1750-1850. In the context of *Neuzeit* (literally translated as the New time), Koselleck sees the occurrence of a certain dynamic, as historical, and especially political and social, *concepts* are coined in the registration and embodiment of the elements and forces of history[5]. Since there is no proclaimed end of the 'saddletime', we might suppose that the concepts are still dynamic – or – that they have also gained other, as yet indefinable characteristics towards the end of the 20th century.

For Benjamin, the *Neuzeit* does not describe any 'new' temporal consciousness. For instance, the idea of progress, developed since the end of 18th century, reduces the idea of time either to the eternal, cultic development of progress itself, or it transfers time to the idea of 'eternal recurrence of the same', which Benjamin characterises as the 'Hell of modernity'. In addition to falling outside of the Koselleckian 'saddletime', the specific eras of baroque and late modernity, which Benjamin stresses and partly views as complementary, lead to other conclusions on the historical dynamics in his work. As the *Neuzeit* does not characterise any qualitative progress in the understanding of historical time, it describes the decline in the comprehension of the nature of time.

Koselleck further interprets, that during the *Neuzeit*, the dynamics of history seemed to increasingly change, and he refers to this phenomenon as a temporal acceleration *(Beschleunigung)*. History, which became singularized and temporalized after the beginning of the *Neuzeit*, also began to undergo a transformation in the structure of experience *(Erfahrungswandel)*. This disruption of the historical temporality could also be interpreted, as Koselleck does, as the distancing of the historical experience *(Erfahrungsraum)* from the future expectations *(Erwartungshorizont)*. Following this distancing, Koselleck distinguishes the temporalities through spatial means, making it impossible to think about the future as merging with the present in these terms. Especially as discussing 'political time', Koselleck describes the horizon as a 'line', which will open a new space of experimentation in the future, although this future is still invisible[6]. As we are supposedly approaching the future, we can never reach it, since the space of experience also speedily disappears into the past. Where, then, is the present, if it is supposed to be a point of collision of experience and expectation? And how are we to understand and attain the knowledge of the present time if the present does not reach the experience or expectation of time?

Benjamin's position comes forth as clearly different, since for him, the future, apart from its phantasmagoric or utopian image, can only be thematized in the present experience. This experience is distinguished from the homogenous or continuous ideas, which characterise the void of time in the present that is 'filled' with experiences. Obviously, Benjamin did not emphasise the acceleration of time, since he wished to find a standstill of the course of time and thinking. In this, he attempted to bind the experiences and expectations together into a coherent temporal knowledge, which, however, was punctual and non-cumulative.

Benjamin's new view on history also included the intention to shatter the historical and political canon of traditions by re-conceptualising the past. As the presentation of memory through various documents of the past became pluralistic, history could no longer be considered as 'singular', namely that of 'the winners' (cf. 1940: VII). In Benjamin's historical situation, it was no longer possible to continue to write history further by the earlier principles. This was not only a result of the discovery of new historical sources, but also of the changing political times[7]. Benjamin's new concepts, which were intended to primarily focus on the experience of the present, found their function in the rupture, in which the historical experience and future expectations were already distant from each other.

The view towards the historical limit space which Benjamin left open in his Theses, is also the movement towards unknown space and time; towards a sphere that exists on the border of what we can see or what we can know about the nature of time and events in it. Including also the limits spaces, as I interpret it, Benjamin changes the perspective from totalizable temporal 'order' towards a cairology, which points out countless alternatives to conceptualise temporal events. For example, the course of time and events related to each other can be conceptualised rhythmically, impulsively, or as sections or structures of time. The temporal leaps, intervals or standstills between the two extremes of totalities and singularities, are also the seeds from which we could begin to construct possibilities of negotiations with the linear time.

Comparing Benjamin to Koselleck's view, it might be said, that he moves towards the extreme position: "Alle Zeit ist Gegenwart in einem ausgezeichneten Sinne. Denn Zukunft ist noch nicht und Vergangenheit nicht mehr. Zukunft gibt es nur als gegenwärtige Zukunft, Vergangenheit nur als gegenwärtige Vergangenheit. Die drei Zeitdimensionen bündeln sich in der Gegenwärtigkeit des menschlichen Daseins, mit Augustin zu reden in seinem Animus."[8]

Still, Benjamin is even more extreme than this, since he constructs the neologisms in order to understand the extended present separately from the traditional Augustinian, or modified Heideggerian temporal dimensions. The question of how historical time consists of the possibility of the present time experience, is addressed in Benjamin's work as politicising the temporality by the perspective change from past to present. Here, we reach my second main issue, which is the:

II Critique of the historical chronology, as an interplay with Chronos and Kairos. As detached from the temporal continuum, the present has become approachable through signs and events, filmic images and revolutionary possibilities of art and politics. It is not only important to notice the disruption in the linearity, but also to find the moments in time that are 'filled' with experiences. The first issues which preserve valuable individual experience are Benjamin's religiously oriented concepts, which describe a messianic moment as the disruption in progressively imagined history, in the form of *redemption (Erlösung)* or salvation *(Rettung)* of the past. These concepts include the possibility of the new history,

as seen through the figure of the Messiah. However, the Messiah-figure is also bound with the moment of action and critique, as in Jewish Messianism the interference of the Messiah to history possibly causes a break in the previous concept of history, and not, as in the Christian idea, transfer the redemption to the unattainable future[9].

The destruction of temporal homogeneity finally creates a gate towards the individual present, in which the *Now-time (Jetztzeit)* is the entrance. The Now is a point of culmination, the realisation of Kairos, which is omnipresent in Benjamin's textual and imaginary world. As the Now-time combines specific moments of the past and the individual experience of the Now, it creates a stage of intensifying the experience of time. Similarly, but not identically, a *dialectical image (dialektisches Bild)* emerges in-between the Now and the Then that emphasises the way in which also the aspect of temporal *insight* and *knowledge (Erkenntnis)* are connected to intellectual and visual experiences. The connection between the ideal figures of historian and politician can be found in the dialectical image, and its meanings are connected to a Benjaminian understanding of 'reversed' dialectics.

The *Now-being (Jetztsein,* Benjamin, 1983: 495) is existentially connected to the Being-in-Now. I see this as the specific 'peak' of present existence, which has a connotation both as the temporal experience of an individual and as the historico-political conditions of this individual's experience. One side of this temporal peak is also expressed by the mental presence, *Geistesgegenwart,* which describes the general condition of being aware of the passing moments of Kairos, by realising how they affect the action in the current situation. The mental awareness includes the chance to turn the ever increasing temporal speed of the modernity into acting before the possibilities disappear into the unreachable past. In addition, *Geistesgegenwärtigkeit* allows for a creative moment, in which to build a bridge towards the new, which is not only a repetition of the old. The passive waiting for the future, which Benjamin also describes through the phantasmagoric image of time, should be turned towards the 'liveliness' of a contemporary action, which is necessarily political (cf. 1928: 115).

The other concepts further emphasise the connection between action and individual existence. The demand for a decision and an action that breaks the 'metahistorical umbrella' constructed by the historical chronology, is conceived of as a sovereign act. The action is connected to the possibility of the emergence of a real state of exception, *Ausnahmezustand,* a temporal and spatial sphere outside of the traditional understanding of a state and legislative order, but it is also on the border of reconciliatory and non-reconciliatory conceptions of historical course (cf. 1940: VIII). The emergence of the real state of emergency, also conceived of as a revolution, means actively stepping into the course of history, again by interrupting the course of events, and 'drawing the emergency break' (GS 1.3. 1232).

Discussed in the context of this work, Benjamin's idea of the political is far from the understanding of the political as a teleological concept or policy[10]. Moreover, his 'politics' include a temporalized concept of action, which makes

politics as a dynamic instead of a static concept[11]. The rough distinction between cairology and chronology on the basis of a change towards the present time is, as I see it, the first step towards more distinguished conceptions of 'political time'. For instance, as Adorno claimed in his *Minima Moralia*, modernity is a qualitative, not a quantitative category[12]. I would interpret that in Benjamin's political categories of conceptualising the temporality, time is conceived of as a qualitative concept, which includes the aspect of the self-understanding of the nature of time and the actualisation of the energy embedded in the modern era.

In briefly combining these issues with the contemporary questions, my argument is that there has not been sufficient critique of and search for the qualitative concept of political time[13]. Nevertheless, the relation between time and politics is not quite as neglected a topic as some contributions to the recent issue on time and democracy in the *International Political Science Review* claim[14]. For my concern, the forms of the current political *Ungleichzeitigkeit*[15] cannot be reasonably discussed without a qualitative understanding of time. But what constitutes this qualitative understanding? For instance, what is the outcome of claiming that the origins of democracy are destroyed in the era of reproduction and media? What is the location of democratic countries in 'historical time'[16]? If we argue for the present, that the location of democracy is Now, how then are we able to distinguish it from the Now of a cigarette advertisement, which claims to be the power of the Now of the cigarettes? As obscure as the question between the democratic and capitalist Now is, it nevertheless shows the lack of discourse in terms of making qualitative differences in temporalities. A capitalist product is de-temporalized and de-contextualized. It exists in the 'void of time', since it can be used and thrown away without being attached to individual experience.

To begin the discussion on qualitative time, we primarily need to break from the arrogant idea that time is a non-problematic question.

BILDRAUM

After completing the first version of this manuscript, I decided to have a free afternoon. Although my head was drumming after editing and correcting the text, I decided to step into a book store. This time I decided to buy something that sounded a-historical and non-Benjaminian, and I found a book titled *the photographic image in digital culture*. After a busy day in Camden Town I stepped on to the tube, and started to read an article by Michelle Henning, whose title sounded promising enough: *digital encounters: mythical pasts and electronic presence*. After reading the first pages, I realised that once again I encountered with Walter Benjamin's *Kunstwerk* essay and another reading of Benjamin. So, although I presumed my work to be an historical reading, I realised that it is not only theoretically but directly related to the contemporary world.

The history did show itself again. Returning to Benjamin's notion of the imaginary character of the past (1940: V), we might regain the imaginary cha-

racter of time and history. However, the space and time are intertwined with the actual present in the way which is only possible in the image and its acknowledgement.

III The third main issue of this work, following the argumentation in relation to linear or chronological time, is the impulse to diffuse the subject/object dichotomies and find possibilities to conceptualise time and image in the Image-space. This is the final component of cairology that I have created throughout the work.

My reading of the *Kunstwerk* resulted to acknowledgement of the temporal interruption in art history and visual perception in Benjamin's historical context. The reproducibility created the impulse to liberate an artistic individual from the chains of the earlier tradition, and to include the present experience and its images directly in the artistic creation. Also, with the change in the modern perception, we saw how the artistic expression became liberated from producing or perceiving mainly representative art.

Discussing non-representational art and its meaning, leads to question purely intellectual or conceptual judgement. The gap between the representation and non-representation may lead to a rupture between the cultural and social spheres, if one wishes to approach them only from the rational and cognitive viewpoints. Generally, we cannot write aesthetic theory without noticing the essential ruptures in aesthetic presentations and artistic techniques. This makes it problematic to rely on the traditional aesthetic theories in discussing contemporary issues. Benjamin's critique of aesthetic rationalism derives from the ideas embedded in early German Romanticism, as he emphasises disruption and the accidental, the new and the non-sensuous in the aesthetic. This means a counter-movement to the Enlightenment, and it strives towards the liberation of creativity, image and imagination. Especially these motifs have been raised more effectively in the twentieth *fin de siècle*, as searching for a way out of 'technological rationalisation' and towards gaining more imaginative and political freedom[17]. In other words, the change of aesthetic culture is not, and cannot be, understood only through the rational view of culture. Rather, other directions are being and have been searched for, that are parallel to this, whether they are historically derived from the romantic, baroque or aesthetic modernity.

One contemporary example of the aesthetic transformation is embedded, for instance, in the concept of image, as the digital and electronic images cause further 'scattering' of the aesthetic tradition, now concerning the more or less established idea of what constitutes a photograph. This transformation is naturally a larger issue, including the change of music via new music technology, and multi-media art. In this, also Kevin Robin notes, that the scattering of earlier aesthetic categorisations is not possible to explain through a rationalist idea of aesthetics, or in this case especially, of the vision, but it also leads to the question of the how this 'new' vision can then be understood. Namely, vision includes fears, desires and non-speakable, which is also one reason for its rationalisation[18].

It is not a novel idea, that the disruptions in tradition re-actualise the prob-

lematic of aesthetic origins and authenticity. All of the eras signify it, and one is no more important than another, as we could say that the cybernetic of our era is no more 'new' than the technological reproducibility in Benjamin's era. This is also an important message in the *Kunstwerk,* as it is not, I would claim, about technological determinism[19] but, rather, technological development is thought to be embedded in the temporal changes, as well as in any other simultaneous, real or non-real eras.

What made the reproducibility as important as it was in the interwar era was its close connection to political manipulation by extreme ideologies, the avant-garde and disputes on whether photography and film were or were not art. Now, we are constantly in a new era, but is it characterised by cultic and ritualistic terms? Is the artistic avant-garde of the 20th *fin de siècle* broken from its cultic ties, in the way in which it celebrates, for instance, the issues of the human body and death[20]?

The conclusions of Benjamin's *Kunstwerk* essay materialise how the Kairos-moment is expanded into the ubiquitous occasion in the artistic space. Throughout the essay, the temporality of modernity becomes characterised as contingent. In this specific case the contingency concerns the work of art, but as I have shown, it also shatters the concepts of tradition, originality and authenticity in general. If we approach Benjamin's suggestion of *politicization of aesthetics* from the temporal perspective, it means to create the new space for aesthetic experience. The experimental space that was interpreted as occurring in the cinema and avant-garde art was a new space, but at the contemporary situation it has lost this novelty. However, the ideas of illumination and play that Benjamin characterised in this aesthetic sphere, gain the freshness when the concepts are tied to the concepts of history and time. Namely, in order to recognise the important moments of re-spatialization and re-temporalization in images Benjamin again constructs his view from the temporal caesura. At the moment, the image is transferable and digitalizable, and it is also possible to change at the same time as it is perceived. This level supports the hypothesis that the image, and the ability to include images in the process of thinking, as snapshots, disruptions or multi-level experiences, may lead to a new reflections also concerning the spatial/temporal understanding. In Benjamin's thought, the *standstill* of events, produces the one of the most meaningful moments. This seed of the present is possible to open in the act of intelligibility in any time.

Both the cinema and photographic images conserve splinters of authentic present moments, although they remain in reproduced form. By viewing, for instance, Chris Marker's *La Jetée*, the present moment can be transformed into multiple layers of experience, as it is preserved in the plurality of its reworked and repeated passages. The constellation of time, conceived of as an 'extended present', or in my characterisation as the Image-space, is conceived of as being included in the experience of the images itself. In its extensive form, the present describes, for instance, the various points in time in which an image is taken, perceived of or when the film is shot. The reflective connection to the temporal images lies in our perception, and through this perception we 'internalise' the images, as their content merges with our own world of experience.

I argue that the basic temporal reference that the image mediates to us is not only the 'death' of time or a moment, following the debates throughout this century, but, rather a view towards a beginning and creativity of the present. This beginning is also limitless, as it may be composed of various deaths and births, while still keeping the temporal space of recollection open. Here, the present, defined cairologically, has already lost the more common characterisation of chronological time, which understands the present only as a short time-span between the past and the future. Instead, the present is multiplied towards levels of experience, perception, ruptures or in the cinematic case, also towards the 'false continuities' of images. This means that if they are materialised, the singularities of both time and images are dispersed in temporal cosmos. To achieve temporal singularities, a cairologic bridge must be built from the singular present of the viewer; the moments can be discovered as the signs of newness in the internal temporal experience.

Following Deleuze, "the movement-image does not reproduce the world but it constitutes an autonomous world, which is made up of breaks and disproportion, deprived from all its centres, addressing itself as such to a viewer who is in himself (sic) no longer centre of his own perception"[21]. Deleuze recognises that the viewer is no longer the centre of his own perceptions, and the classic *percipiens* and the *percipi* have lost their influence[22]. In other words, the centre is lost, because there is no longer any one definable centre. The position of the viewer has now changed from the 'single relation' between the subject and object of perception towards the multiple crossing points of the perceived and perceiver, in which the Image-space can be re-produced and is also constantly affected by the actor.

If a political space is analysed as a space of action *(Handlungsraum)* the thematic comes close to *Bildraum*. This is a controversial concept of space, opposed to a homogeneous idea, which enables the self to experience objects and external events in a predictable, quantifiable way. In political discourse, the individual right to time, the present and the future and to one's own interpretation of the past can be set against the territorial and spatial terror of the nationalist discourse, as, for instance, Arjun Appadurai calls for in his claim for post national and non-territorial forms of solidarity[23]. This combines the singular citizens who wish to define themselves and their own spaces after territorial terror in their states. In opposition to territorial occupation, there is a voice for the present that gives right for the singular space without the fear of the future which might turn to destruction in the nationalist terror.

We have reached the beginning to a non-synchronised view on history, which, as connected with Kairos, is never closed and never totally absent. The question that follows this view, concerns the meaning of the 'post-definitions' in the contemporary cultural analysis[24]. Does the *post* intend to step out of the previous history, is it the repetition of it, or does it really outline something new? Despite the idea of the speeding time-experience in modernity, is it necessary to multiply the end of modernity with the suffix *post post* modernity? I do not claim that Benjamin's thought without reflection on the contemporary issues, can be read as providing answers to this problematic. Yet, his idea of

political time, combined with its qualitative nature, leads to the era in which the totalizing Chronos-time breaks down.

In this disruption, time begins to be characterised as a sphere, in which there are single moments that are experienced by individuals and that grasp something of the internal nature of the present. We have approached states of experiences, whether they are called Now-times or Image-Spaces, as a combining link between our internal time and the time 'surrounding us'. The way in which external time is understood can range from political to historical, or from global to cosmological. The meaning of the singularity of the moments and their subjective experience is to build a 'bridge' in-between individuals and various categories of 'time'. Every moment is tied to its present, as well as tied to other layers of time, expressed by histories, memories, expectations, fears and hopes.



Chris Marker Image Library

NOTES

NOTES TO PREFACE

1 Kraus, modified quote from Benjamin 1939a: 647.

2 An additional common temporal idea between Chronos and Kairos is the cyclic idea, which I do not explicitly discuss in this work, although Benjamin's idea of time is also constructed against the "eternal recurrence of the same" (ewige Wiedekunft des Gleichen) which follows Blanqui's idea. This was, as Benjamin claims, constructed ten years before Nietzsche's Zarathustra (PW: 75). The cyclic idea of historical movement contradicts the Western linearity of history, as it is conceived of as a primitive or pagan understanding of time.

3 Like e.g. that of Adam (1995) or Giddens (1987, 1991), Beck (1986, 1993). See also Elias' book on time (1992), which was ignored for a long time.

4 Giddens 1987: 153.

5 Giddens 1987: 155.

6 Es gibt eine Geschichtsauffassung, die im Vertrauen auf die Unendlichkeit der Zeit nur das Tempo der Menschen und Epochen unterscheidet, die schnell oder langsam auf der Bahn des Fortschrittes dahinrollen. Dem entspricht die Zusammenhanglosigkeit, der Mangel an Präzision und Strenge der Forderung, die sie an die Gegenwart stellt (1915a: 75).

7 So far, only the ambiguous concepts of aura and dialectical Image have provoked more extensive conceptual work among Benjaminian scholars (see e.g. Stoessel 1983, Haverkamp, 1992, Jennings 1987, S. Weber 1996).

8 I claim that Benjamin's approach comes close to conceptual research in terms of the problematisation of historical temporality, and as far as the concepts are understood, as being essentially transformable. I do not, however, want this claim to simply be identified with the traits of 'conceptual history' since around the 1960's. The frames in which I conceive Benjamin's conceptual praxis are those outlined in this chapter.

9 Benjamin distinguishes philology as one of the methods of studying history, which is connected to the history of transformation. The other methods are pragmatische Geschichte and the Phänomen-Geschichte: ...Die Philologie ist Verwandlungsgeschichte, ihre Einsinnigkeit beruht darauf daß die Terminologie nicht Voraussetzung sondern Stoff einer neuen usf. wird (GS VI: 93-94).

10 Benjamin GS I.3: 1103, Br. 793-795. Benjamin's idea of philology in Trauerspiel, also derived from romantic sources, see letter to Scholem 5.3.1924: Höchstens daß ich eben die Disposition andeute. Anfang und Schluß werden (...) methodische Bemerkungen zur Literaturwissenschaft bringen, in denen ich so gut es geht mit einem romantischen Begriff von Philologie mich vorstellen will (Br. 342).

11 These are, for instance, 'real' history, 'real' historical image, 'real' historian, all of which signify Benjamin's concept as a critique of the commonly understood meaning, especially of a German historicist idea of the history.

12 Koselleck 1989: 321.

13 Koselleck 1989: 9.

14 The closest reflections on the question of the present time Koselleck makes in thinking about the nature of time as questioning on the role of *Zeitgeschichte* and the query of the history of the concept of *Gegenwartsgeschichte* in his article from 1988: *Begriffsgeschichtliche Anmerkungen zur 'Zeitgeschichte'*. In the article, Koselleck approaches the matter through the Augustinian temporal dimensions in *Confessiones*, Book 11. The influence of Augustinus' famous distinction between present of the present, past of the present and the future of the present, is followed by Koselleck through the work of Heidegger and Luhmann, as he offers nine combinations of temporal experiences (1988a: 19).

15 Koselleck 1988b: 42-46.

16 This diagnostic issue is formulated especially in the letters in which Benjamin describes his method in the Kunstwerk -essay (see Br. 671-691; GS VI: 814; cf. GS VII.2: 665).

17 The weight that should be given to the aspects of theology in Benjamin's thinking has been argued over throughout the decades of Benjaminian interpretation. I choose to approach the matter as mainly related to Jewish theology, that includes the philosophical part of the coin. This approach is interpreted in accordance with Benjamin's concepts. About the critique and redemption see, for instance, Gagnebin's interpretation (1978: 15-19).

18 Cf. Caygill 1998, who discusses Benjamin's 'immanent critique' as an extensive philosophical issue with a connection to Hegelian speculative critique. See also McCole (1993: e.g. 27), who discusses the immanent critique in a historical context.

19 The temporal idea of *Erlösung* will be analysed in the chapter, *The Glance of Fortuna.*

20 The literary critique was to be culminated into the publication of *Collective Essays,* which would have included his works on Hebel, Hessel, Keller, Proust, Gide and *The Task of the Critique*. The fact that the book remained unpublished was, according to Benjamin, one of the biggest defeats in his life. On his ideas of establishing a genre of critique in Germany, see Br. 505 to Scholem. Benjamin also planned a journal called Krisis und Kritik with Bertolt Brecht, but later withdraw himself from the project (Br. 517-522).

21 To avoid any misunderstanding, Benjamin's idea of critique was not the same as Horkheimer's, outlined in the 1937 essay on *Traditional und kritische Theorie*. The basic difference, concerning the understanding of history and Benjamin's constant attack on linearity, narrative and any concepts of totality, or organism remained as a gap between Benjamin and the Frankfurt School. Yet, although conclusions and interpretation of the material remained rather distant from each other Benjamin's and Horkheimer's fields of interests intertwined, which becomes obvious especially if the motives of Benjamin's early work is compared to Horkheimer's Nachgelassene Schriften 1914-1931.

22 Benjamin's own description of his work to his friend Asja Lacis, brings forth the way in which he intended to reconceptualize the aesthetic discourse: Als ich von ihm (Benjamin/kl) erfuhr, daß es sich um eine Analyse der deutschen Barocktragödie des 17. Jahrhunderts handele, daß diese Literatur nur wenige Spezialisten kennen, diese Tragödien niemals gespielt werden – zog ich eine Grimasse: Wozu sich mit toter Literatur beschäftigen? Er schwieg eine Zeit, dann sagte er: Erstens bringe ich in die Wissenschaft, in die Ästhetik eine neue Terminologie. Was das neuere Drama betrifft, so gebraucht man da die Begriffe 'Tragödie, Trauerspiel' wahllos, nur als Worte. Ich zeige den Prinzipiellen Unterschied zwischen Tragödie und Trauerspiel." (Asja Lacis 1976: 47)

23 One major problem is the translation of the concepts, as some of them are not possible to translate at all. The most difficult ones have been those of *Erkenntnis* (knowledge/insight) and *Erkennbarkeit* (intelligibility) or *Denkbilder* (thought-images). Most of the cases I have left the original concepts in the brackets.

24 The terms intra, inner and co-textual are derived from Palonen, 1996.

25 In this I would agree with Sigrid Weigel's critique, who claims that the image in Benjaminian thought is in most interpretations subsumed as a secondary issue and the image is approached as a help-concept or is used as a metaphor (cf. Weigel, 1996: Introduction).

26 Haverkamp 1992: 70-71.

27 Although I shall use the heterogeneity of the material in my references, I would like to emphasise that the inner textual reading which brings out the specificity of Benjamin's textual world has been practised in books such as Caygill 1998 and Konersmann 1991. The collection volume like Benjamin, Osborne 1994 is also very fruitful in this approach.

28 On the reception e.g. Schöttker 1992: 268-280, or concerning the 1990's English books and biographies on Benjamin, see Osborne 1998. The first editors of Benjamin's work and letters like Adorno, Scholem and Tiedemann had a specific influence on the intellectual 'positioning' of Benjamin's thought. The sharpest critique of this 'monopoly' comes perhaps from Heißenbüttel 1963. Werner Fuld's first biography on Benjamin, *Zwischen den Stühlen,* is also partly constructed as a critique of the first editors, as well as Hering's work which is more direct, especially in its critique: 1979: 13-28 .

29 E.g. Greffrath 1981, Günther 1974, Tiedemann 1983b.

30 On Adorno's and Horkheimer's critique and discussion on Benjamin see also Br. 671-683; 716-728; 772-779. For a short resumé about Benjamin's position in this discussion see also Arendt, 1971: 14-16.

31 One major work in the literary theory is Jennings, 1987. On de Man's reading of Benjamin, e.g. *Conclusions: Walter Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator"*, 1986.

32 Eagleton 1981, cf. also Steinberg 1996: 4-5. On the works that offer a 'new' and wider perspective for contemporary readers, see Benjamin & Osborne 1994, Buci-Glucksmann 1994, Buck-Morss 1990, Caygill 1998, Eidam 1992, Ferris (ed.) 1996, Konersmann 1991, Weidmann 1992, Weigel 1992, 1996. In Italy, Benjamin's reception and translations are taken by Agamben, e.g. 1993. The fruitful reading of 'aesthetic' Benjamin is e.g. in diacritics 22.3-4 /1992 and *New German Critique* 39 1986.

33 E.g. Habermas 1972.

34 Ouaknin 1995: 63.

NOTES TO PART I

1 See Adorno's letter to Horkheimer, 12.6.1941: GS VII.2: 773-4. This text also had other impacts, one of which was inspiring Adorno and Horkheimer to co-author the memorial text for Benjamin. This text was the *Philosophische Fragmente*, published in ZfS (1944). After rewriting of these Fragments, Adorno and Horkheimer published them as *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (GS VII.2: 773).

2 Also Niccolo Machiavelli emphasised the moment of Kairos as he wrote about *occasione*, which refers to fortunate surroundings for action, which can lead to good or bad success. As the Kairos time is short and contingent, it is also the right time for action in a potential political sense, which is to be distinguished from the flow or durability of 'eternal' time (cf. Machiavelli 1988, VI: 8, VII: 19).

3 Here I use Benjamin's own distinction between the methodical ways of studying history. They are: *pragmatische Geschichte, Phänomen-Geschichte and Philologie*, which I interpret more broadly as a conceptual history and praxis, as noted in the methodological chapter (GS VI: 93-94).

4 A further copy, a hand-written version of the *Theses,* was found by Giorgio Agamben, in *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris.

5 GS VII.2: 782. The letters from Soma Morgenstern to Gershom Scholem in 1970 and 1972 revealed Benjamin's personally chaotic situation and his final disappointment with the historical materialism due to the Ribbentrop pact. The letters include also Morgenstern's speculation on the destiny of the original Theses as well as a strong statement about the *Theses* being Benjamin's revision of the Marxist doctrine (GS VII.2: 770-773).

6 Benjamin's confrontation with the philosophy of history began already with his earliest publications. The idea of history which was finally produced in the Theses, dated back to writing of *Das Passagen-Werk*, which means in the end of the 1920's. (See also Eidam 1992: 397-398).

7 Cf. Benjamin's letter to Scholem 6.5.1934 (Br. 604-605).

8 A further connotation to Kairos and historical time is found in Paul Tillich, who outlined the time without the moment of Kairos, as being devoid of experience (Tillich 1961, see also the chapter, *The Moment of Kairos*).

9 On the variety of interpretations, see e.g. Konersmann 1991, who approaches the Theses as an intellectual testament, and reads them explicitly one by one. Balfour, in 1991, reads them as an epistemological question. Makropoulos in 1989, who reads the text a outlining the contingency of modernity. Other works on Benjamin's idea of history and time, see also Gagnebin 1978, Tiedemann 1983 a,b, Osborne 1994, Weidmann 1992, or Eidam 1992.

10 E.A. Poe, 1966, Bd. 9, 251-289. For further interpretations, see for instance Tiedemann 1983: 138, Konersmann 1991: 20-37.

11 In *Berliner Kindheit* Benjamin presents an appearance reminiscent of this dwarf. This is *Bucklicht Männlein*, based on the old children's story. The little man is devious and mean, but is actually an alter ego of the child, being bad and doing forbidden things (1933d: 429-430).

12 Scholem's critique Br. 525-529, on Adorno's, see e.g. Br. 672.

13 Tiedemann stresses that Jewish and Marxist parallels in Benjamin's vocabulary might appear as the return to theological concepts, but this is not necessarily due to Benjamin's conviction (Tiedemann 1983b: 99-100).

14 Habermas 1972: esp. 215. Cf. Balfour's critique 1991 and Weigel 1996: 5-9, concerning Habermas' misreading of the concept of actuality.

15 Cf. Konersmann, 1991: 27-32. On secularisation-phenomenon see e.g. Blumenberg 1966, Löwith 1963, 1983, Marramao 1989.

16 For instance Richard Rorty's figure of the ironic intellectual is not that which I understand with regard to Benjamin's playful attitude (cf. Rorty 1992: e.g. 14-17).

17 I use the translation 'happiness' for Glück, which is also used in Zohn's translation in Illuminations, 1992. However, parallel to the idea of happiness, I would stress the concepts of luck and fortune, which emphasise the more sudden and unexpected character of the Glück. The image of presence and happiness connects this idea to the myth of Kairos.

18 Leibniz 1720 /1975: 22.

19 Benjamin wrote his indirect critique of Bloch's Geist der Utopie in his reflections on politics called *Der Wahre Politiker*, which was never published as such, however, parts of this manuscript were included in *Zur Kritik der Gewalt* (1921). Benjamin studied Bloch intensely in 1919, and met with him occasionally after that time (see Br. 217-219).

20 Koselleck 1985: 1ff. and shortly also in 1985c: 99-103.

21 Koselleck 1985a: 1-13.

22 The difference in Benjamin's concept of future could be described, for instance, by referring to Heidegger, as Heidegger poses the aspect of future (as death) as encompassed by the extended present, or conversely, thinking about the past (birth) as encompassed by *Dasein*'s historicity: *Dasein* is historical because it can only be historical. Heidegger names the temporal ecstasies as the *Gewesenheit, eigentliche Gegenwart* and *Zu-kunft,* which are, however, not to be separated from each other, but to be conceived of as elementary parts of each other and the elementary part of *Dasein*'s self-understanding. Temporality appears in each ecstasies, and it cannot be measured quantitatively (1986: 376). Heidegger's temporal re-definitions derive from the Augustinian idea of the future which is present in expectation (*praesens de*

futuris), and in the past, in memory (*praesens de praeteris*), and it is the presence of the present time in perception (*praesens de praesentibus*) (Augustinus Confessiones 11: e.g. 1,2,14, 28). (On the comparison of Augustinus and Heidegger, see also Ricoeur 1985, Vol. 1). Heidegger conceives of time as primarily historical, as a specific historicity, whereas Benjamin explicitly distinguishes between time and history, and understand history as infinite. Furthermore, Heidegger distinguishes between continuous and discontinuous temporalities, but he conceives of them more substantially as 'belonging' to historical time, whereas Benjamin's time concept is partly constructed as being detached from historical time. On Benjamin's critique of Heidegger, see letters to Scholem in Br. 235, 246 (on the comparison between temporal thinking by Heidegger and Benjamin, see Caygill 1994 or A. Benjamin 1994).

23Scholem 1963: 7-8.

24 Scholem 1987: 462.

25 Scholem 1963: 9-45.

26 See Bloch: *Geist der Utopie or Das Prinzip Hoffnung*. See also Scholem's critique of Bloch's Marxist-Jewish mixture of the idea of utopia (Scholem 1963: 13).

27 Interpretations often use Benjamin's Messianism as containing a metaphysical element of thinking which is seen as reducing his philosophical contribution (e.g. Bowie 1997: 235-236). Yet, I consider the Messianic element from this viewpoint being also philosophically more fertile than restricting, especially with regard to the temporal connection.

28 Scholem 1963: 24-55.

29 In this, Benjamin's view seems to differ from Koselleck's idea of historical time, which cannot possibly be influenced by, for instance, human utopias (1985a: 13).

30 Trigano, *La récit de la disparue*, quoted after Ouaknin 1995: 74.

31 Cf. Gagnebin 1978: 18-19.

32 The explicit idea of the image of happiness *(das Bild von Glück)*, is not only as it is poetically translated in English 'thoroughly coloured' by the time (*Illuminations* 1992: 245), but in Benjamin's original text it is pierced through the time: *durch und durch von der Zeit tingiert ist* (1940: II).

33 On Benjamin's wish images, see especially Buck-Morss 1990: 110-158.

34 One example Benjamin uses as materialising the mixture of temporalities with the issue of commodity, is *fashion*. It includes themes like novelty and change, and variations on the past which are connected to the phenomena of modernity. Images of fashion might as well be seen as images of desire, turned towards the future and against the outdated (cf. Lindroos, 1996a: 150).

35 Baudelaire, *Fleurs de mal*, Benjamin 1939b: 618-624.

36 Cf. Konersmann 1991: 42-47 and on the meeting of Benjamin and Tillich, see Br. 591, 749. The way Benjamin's *Jetztzeit* is reminiscent of Tillich's idea of Kairos, especially in Benjamin's XIV Thesis, was also noted by Adorno. See his letter to Horkheimer in 12.6.1941 (GS VII: 774).

37 Tillich 1961: 48.

38 Tillich 1961: 48.

39 Tillich 1961: 25-28.

40 Tillich 1961: 48

41Tillich 1961: 28

42 Cf. Marcuse's afterwords in Benjamin 1965: 101. Marcuse emphasises that for Benjamin, the *Schuld* and *Sühne* are social categories. Also, it is the society which constructs destiny, and not the individual. The *Erlösung* is the redemption of this destiny, and individual happiness is connected to the actualisation of redemption.

43 On the interpretations see e.g. Bolz 1989: 7-8, who compares Weber's idea with Benjamin's, although I disagree with his view of Benjamin as standing in the 'shadow' of Weber. See also Caygill 1998: 56-57.

44 On the idea of the Christian Chronik, see also Koselleck 1988: 24-25, in which he characterises the Christian writing of history as *Fortschreibung* or Chronik, occupying a space in which the end of history and the main content of the horizon of expectation is characterised as the Judgement Day.

45 Scholem, 1963: 7-8; 1987: 462; Benjamin 1940: II.

46 Cf. 1921b: 203-204.

47 Konersmann 1991: 52ff.

48 See Konersmann 1991: 53.

49 Cf. PW: 578, in which Benjamin considers the textum of historical images to be read-able only at a certain time, which forms their critical core. Benjamin also uses the reference to *textum* in the essay on Proust, as he characterises the intensity of Proust's texts through their structure (1929b: 311-312). The text being open to infinite interpretations is one trait of modern philosophy which is closely related to Jewish thinking and the Talmudic tradition of interpretation, such as Julia Kristeva and Emmanuel Levinas. However, I do not consider it is essential at this point place to comment on other, more structuralist approaches, which consider reality to be the art of a text. On reading Benjamin from the point of the structuralist or deconstructionist view of language, see e.g. Eagleton 1987 or Menke 1991.

50 Benjamin emphasises the creativity and liveliness of language, as it contains far more that mere "graphic images" (Schriftbild) and spoken words; see also the chapters *Conceptualising the Images of the Past* and *Benjamin's Mimesis.*

51 Cf. Osborne 1994a: 66.

52 Krumme 1980: 101 ff.

53 Konersmann 1991: 54-55.

54 See for instance Benjamin 1916 and 1933 a,b.

55 Düttmann 1994: 36-37.

56 "Man hat der Historie das Amt, die Vergangenheit zu richten, die Mitwelt zum Nutzen zukünftiger Jahre zu belehren, beigemessen: so hoher Aemter unterwindet sich gegenwärtiger Versuch nicht: er will bloß zeigen, wie es eigentlich gewesen." (Leopold von Ranke 1824, In: Sämmtliche Werke 33. And 34. Bd. 1874: vii. Cf. Konersmann, 1991: 90) Ranke opposes the idea of judging or teaching the contemporary through history, and instead intends to show or tell 'how it was'. Benjamin's critique concerns more the idea of *eigentlich gewesen* than Ranke's attempt to construct a science of history. On Benjamin's position outlined with the historicism, see Konersmann 1991: 90-111, Gagnebin 1978 or Kittsteiner 1986.

57 Meinecke 1959: 196-204.

58 Koselleck 1988: 17-18, 27; 1989: 62-66.

59 Cf. Joseph Görres 1828/1958: 49.

60 This idea could be compared to Max Weber's well-known distinction between a politician who lives more or less passionately for politics *(für die Politik)* and one who lives from politics *(von der Politik)*. As for Benjamin, the 'spiritual politician' does not have to exclude the aspect of material, Weber also stresses that these categories do not exclude each other (Weber, 1919: 513).

61 Cf. Engels, *Das Begräbnis von Karl Marx*, in Werke, Bd. 19: 335-336.

62 This position seems to derive from Nietzsche's critical attitude towards history, outlined in *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*, Werke I: 219;229-230.

63 Tiedemann 1983a

64 I shall come back to the early romantic thought in the background of Benjamin's aesthetic theory in the chapter *On Benjamin's Position in Aesthetic Theory*.

65 Caygill 1998: 40-42.

66 Caygill 1998: 40.

67 GS I.3: 876, also in letter to Scholem, Br. 342.

68 Bowie 1997: 216. See also pp. 224-226 on the issue of music and language in Benjamin.

69 In this context it is again difficult to translate Benjamin's concept of *Erkenntnis*. I commonly translate it as knowledge or insight, and the concept *Erkennbarkeit* into intelligibility or recognizability. Yet, when I do not consider the translation as accurate, I leave the original concept in the parenthesis.

70 A similar idea is expressed in the Thesis Appendix A, as Benjamin criticises historicism based on its causal interpretation between the historical moments.

71 Notions on overcoming traditional dialectics of subject/object distinction, and an evident starting point for the theory of knowledge, are contained mainly in Benjamin's convolute N of *Das Passagen-Werk*. Generally speaking, the idea that the subject/object distinction cannot be overcome through language, as well as the critique of the metaphysics of attempting to overcome the dichotomy were crafted throughout the 20th century. One of the major questions in both the hermeneutic and analytic directions of philosophy, was the 'critique of metaphysics' and of subject/object distinctions. In Benjamin's work, the question also appears, as the issues are included in his idea of language and his critique of the Neokantian concept of experience, although he does not carry them systematically through. A further attempt to overcome the distinction is embedded especially in his idea of images and expressed in the concept of the Image-space *(Bildraum)*.

72 Benjamin, GS 1.3. 1233. In *Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire* (1939a) Benjamin names the *unwillkürliche Gedächtnis as mémoire involontaire*, following Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*. This is an asymmetrical concept with 'willkürliches Gedächtnis', *mémoire volontaire*, the memory which is controlled by intellect: "Das reine Gedächtnis-die mémoire pure – der Bergsonschen Theorie wird bei ihm (*Proust*/kl) zur mémoire involontaire – einem Gedächtnis, das unwillkürlich ist." (1939a: 609) In examining these concepts of memory, I prefer to use the French originals. The connection to Freudian consciousness and unconsciousness is explicit, for example, in Benjamin's interpretation of photography, in that the element of 'optical unconsciousness' is more directly bound to Freud's unconsciousness (see *Kleine Geschichte der Photographie*, 1931: 371).

73 The idea of the truth performing in language has its origin in Benjamin's reflection on Kant. Through this, Benjamin tended to separate the concept of experience from that of the mathematic-mechanical one, as is seen in his 1918 essay: "Die große Umbildung und Korrektur die an dem einseitig mathematisch-mechanisch orientierten Erkenntnisbegriff vorzunehmen ist, kann nur durch eine Beziehung der Erkenntnis auf die Sprache wie sie schon zu Kant's Lebzeiten Hamann versucht hat gewonnen werden. (...) Ein in der Reflexion auf das sprachliche Wesen der Erkenntnis gewonnener Begriff von ihr wird einen korrespondierenden Erfahrungsbegriff schaffen, der auch Gebiete deren wahrhafte systematische Einordnung Kant nicht gelungen ist umfassen wird ." (1918: 168)

74 The Benjaminian method of Darstellung, in which the historical moment and the present are mixed, was practised for instance in the article *Am Ende steht das Zuschlagen in die Tageszeitung* (TAZ) Nr. 5485 vom 18.03.1998 Seite 10 Ausland 104: Interview with Graf Sotscheck and Fürsten Metternich (*Ein Gespräch mit dem Fürsten Metternich in englischen Exil uber Erfolg und Miserfolg seines Kampfes gegen den politisch-sozialen Umsturz*).

75 See Bowie 1997: 212. On the contingency of the work of art, Benjamin 1919: 69, 73, 77.

76 About interpretation, see e.g. Foucault 1991: 46-92.

77 Nietzsche GdM II, 6,8 *Werke III*.

78 Nietzsche FW, *Werke II*: 115-117/ 110, 111.

79 Nietzsche GdM,*Werke III*: 209-767.

80 Nietzsche *Morgenröte Werke II*: 123.

81 On the interpretation of Talmud, see Ouaknin 1986: 85-87.

82 Foucault, 1977: 156-7.

83 See Weigel 1996: 36.

84 Foucault 1977: 160.

85 For instance in Benjamin's work on Eduard Fuchs, his idea is to support a dialogue between the natural and human sciences. This discussion should, in Benjamin's view, establish a link to cultural history that would be approached from an opposite perspective than the earlier cultural interpretation (*Kulturgeschichte, Historie einer Wiedersinn*). The cultural history which Benjamin suggests would form itself in dialectical relation to other disciplines (1937: 474).

86 Weidmann 1992: 124.

87 See Koselleck 1989: 38- 66.

88 Koselleck 1989: 60.

89 Koselleck 1988b: 42-46.

90 On the distinguished analysis of the temporal differences between Benjamin's memory and remembrance, see Andrew Benjamin 1992: 156-162.

91 The critique of the identification or empathy can also be combined with Benjamin's critique of Wilhelm Dilthey. On the interpretation, Gagnebin 1978: 60-62.

92 Nietzsche, *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen*. Werke 1: 219 ff. On the commentary on the 'history of the winners' see e.g. Koselleck's study on war memorials, which signify the ways to legitimise the meaning of death (Sinn des Sterbens) as a 'political cult' and its transition throughout time. If Koselleck's article is compared to Benjamin's critique of the winners' history, it culminates in an inquiry for whom these memo-

rials were actually built (see e.g. Koselleck *Einleitung* in *Der politische Totenkult Kriegdenkmale in der Moderne*, 1994). The war memorials are also taken as a target for public discussion, and the subject connects, for example, the rhetorical, symbolical or historical perspectives in the discussion of historical transformations. About the way how war memorials are approached as manifestations of visual 'slogans' *(Schlagbilder)*, see Diers 1997: 13, and 66 ff.

93 This is the similar idea concerning destruction of experiences that Benjamin follows in his essay, *Erfahrung und Armut* (1933), and also in his work on Baudelaire (1939).

94 This idea also goes back to the difference between *Erinnerung* and *Gedächtnis*, in which Benjamin follows Reik. The temporal differences are that the *Gedächtnis* is considered to be protecting the memories, and the *Erinnerung* is aimed at destroying them (1939b: 612).

95 Benjamin 1933c, 1936b, 1939a.

96 The art historians, Wölfflin and Riegl, criticised the universal historical idea of times of degeneration *(Verfallszeiten)*. As Benjamin reviewed their work in Strenge Kunstwissenschaft (1933), this is probably one link to this Thesis (cf. Bolz 1984: 140). The idea of the culture as barbarity (*Es ist niemals ein Dokument der Kultur, ohne zugleich ein solches der Barbarei zu sein* 1940: VII) is, according to Adorno, derived from Spengler. Further, as he wrote on Spengler's *Untergang des Abendlandes* (in GS 10.1: *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft* I 1977: 71), Adorno notices that he and Benjamin both wrote on the culture as barbarity without knowing the similarities of their formulations (GS VII.2: 774).

97 Jennings 1987: 50.

98 About conceptual history and the 'development' on the concept progress/*Fortschritt*, see for example Joachim Ritter 1972, Reinhart Koselleck 1975, 1980. On politics and 'progressive' history, e.g. Gunnell 1994. During the 18th century, the aspects of philosophy and history in the German context merged into the conception of the philosophy of history *(Geschichtsphilosophie)*. What is meaningful in this context is that history as a philosophical construction was now seen as opposed to its theological constructions, as they were primarily formed on the basis of Augustine's idea of the progress towards 'God's Kingdom'. Augustine's progress is described metaphorically, as the moment of time is conceived of as ranging from temporal to eternal, from visible to invisible (*De civitate Dei*: 10, 14). However, since the end of the 18th Century, the leading principle of history was no longer God, but the Human being and ratio, and the idea of progress was further developed through the concept of history which was used in German idealism and historicism. This is roughly the discussion in which Benjamin's critique of the concept of progress is based on.

In his extensive work, Karl Löwith interprets how the theological notion of the story of salvation *(Heilsgeschichte)* was transformed into the so called secular or rationalised idea of history (e.g. Löwith, 1960, 1983). Karl Löwith interprets the rise and fall of progress as caused by the fact that the progress had a more powerful position than was intended. Nobody could answer to the self-determining demands of progress, and the new demands were created as soon as the old ones were recognised. This illustrates how the temporal idea of progress was mixed up with the ever accelerating image of time. Koselleck and Blumenberg both interpret the matter as

Beschleunigung or *Acceleration* (Koselleck, e.g. *Fortschritt und Beschleunigung*, 1985. Blumenberg 1974: 62-63) However, the idea of progress no longer seemed reversible, as it expanded from its origins into something impossible to control.

99 Koselleck 1988a: 222-224.

100 Koselleck 1980: 214-216.

101 Jacques Derrida notes in his interpretation of Benjamin's essay *Zur Kritik der Gewalt*, that the problem of translation is how to distinguish between the power of law (*force de loi/Gesetzeskraft*) and violence (*Gewalttätigkeit*). Benjamin's critique of Gewalt is translated into French and English as emphasising the violence/Violence that does legitimate one of the sources in Benjamin's critique, namely, Sorel's *Reflections on Violence*. However, it is important to consider that in German, the concept of *Gewalt* means the legitimate power of *Macht*, like *Amtsgewalt*, which is seen as the official 'state power', not as 'violence' (Derrida 1991: 12-15). In discussing Benjamin, I would stronger emphasise the aspect of temporally transferred power structures, which are embedded in the transferring of the 'historical heritage', as well as the conception of power hidden in ancient myths, instead of deconstructing the linguistic structure of these texts.

102 Schmitt 1922 /1979: 11.

103 Regarding the connection between Benjamin and Schmitt, see e.g. Benjamin's letter to Schmitt 1930 in Taubes 1987: 27 and Rumpf 1976: 37 ff. The letter is published in GS 1.3: 887, although it was never published in the collection of Benjamin's letters. For an explicit analysis on the relations between Benjamin and Schmitt, see Samuel Weber: 1992.

104 Even in Benjamin's earlier work, there are no clear historical references to his concepts of *Neuzeit* or Modernity. Makropoulos has analysed the periodization of Benjamin's concepts as follows: the early *Neuzeit* in his work refers to the period of time starting around 1600, the early modern from 1750-1850, and the modern from 1850 onwards. Benjamin sees the time around 1900, and especially between the Word Wars, as a fulfilment of modernity (Makropoulos 1989: 21).

105 Benjamin 1933c, 1936b, 1939a.

106 On the interpretation, see also Makropoulos 1989: 31.

107 In connection with this issue, it might also be interesting to examine Hannah Arendt's conception of the sovereign, as she sees the emergence of the sovereign as occurring during a period in which the public arena had been destroyed by the sovereign power (Arendt 1981: 216). This destroyed the public space for decision making. The ancient image of community was seen as constructed for the rulers and the ruled were seen as an idealised image. As Arendt parallels the moments of decision making and action, what follows is that the visible and invisible causes of action, the irreversibility of action, as well as the processes connected to certain actions become relevant. Arendt considers action to be closely connected to the human condition, and this should be preserved by conserving the plurality among human beings. One needs neither a public space nor a 'space of appearance' (*Erscheinunsraum*) in order to act. Conversely, for Arendt, action itself creates a new political space.

108 Goethe Aus meinem Leben. Dichtung und Wahrheit, *Werke* 10: 30; cf. Benjamin 1940: X.

109 The first journal that Benjamin planned but never realised was called Angelus Novus. The name Angelus refers to an angel who, according to the legend in Talmud, was created in order to sing the hymn of God, after which it was to disappear. For every moment of the disappearance, their actuality (as uniqueness) was guaranteed. This actuality was intended to be included in the message of the name of the Journal (Benjamin, *Ankündigung der Zeitschrift: Angelus Novus*, 1988: 374).

110 The whole poem is published e.g. in Benjamin-Scholem *Briefwechsel* 1985: 104-105.

111 As Christine Buci-Glucksmann and Sigrid Weigel note in their interpretations, the image is reminiscent of the 'face of Medusa'. Sigrid Weigel also sees three different 'angels' in her interpretation of the ninth Thesis: see Weigel 1996: 49-51 and also Buci-Glucksmann's interpretation of the Angelus 1994: Part One.

112 This refers to Goethe: "Zum Augenblick dürft ich sagen: 'Verweile doch, du bist so schön! Es kann die Spur von meinen Erdetagen Nicht in Äonen untergehn. – ' Im Vorgefühl von solchem hohen Glück, Genieß ich jetzt den höchsten Augenblick." (Faust II V Akt: 11580-85). The contemporary inspiration of the angel metaphor has led modern vocalist Laurie Anderson to write a song inspired by the *Theses*. The song is called *The Dream Before* (dedicated to Benjamin), and can be found on her album *Strange Angels* from 1989.

113 Tiedemann 1983: 99, also Kaiser 1974: 32.

114 This idea of interpretation is present throughout Benjamin's whole work (see e.g. 1937: 468). The idea is also expressed in Benjamin's expanded conception of how to read the non-written aspects of the past: "...das im Werk das Lebenswerk, im Lebenswerk die Epoche und in der Epoche der Gesamte Geschichtsverlauf aufbewahrt ist und aufgehoben." (1940: XVII)

115 Konersmann 1991: 122.

116 A physical theory on singularity refers to the fact that every systematic or universal theory and its predictability breaks down in the singularity (e.g. Hawking 1988: 52). The idea could be useful in signifying the further meaning of the 'singularity' of the objects in time also in a larger context than is presented in the Benjaminian interpretation.

117 Cf. Rodowick 1997: 23-24.

118 Aristotle, e.g. Phys. IV: 15, 223a, 22-29.

119 For instance, French sociologist Edgar Morin and anthropologist Jean Rouch followed Vertov in thinking that the camera was able to reveal a deeper level of truth about the world than the 'imperfect human eye' (see *Imagining Reality* 1996: 249-250).

120 After Petric 1987: 110. More on Vertov's principle and the Agit-train, for instance in *Imagining Reality* 1996: 48 ff.

121 Here, Benjamin's other example of a temporal leap is fashion, in which the past materially mixes with the contemporary. At first glance, there do not seem to be many connecting characteristics between the French Revolution and fashion, but if the matter is examined in the context of temporality, the connection becomes more visible. Fashion is a mixture of old and new, and it connects past and present elements in a non-linear and contingent way. The 'come-back' of the past does not proceed linearly or logically in history, but follows, as Benjamin emphasises, the laws of commodity.

122 *Erfahrungsraum* in Koselleckian sense (1989: e.g. 349 ff.).
123 In *Illuminations* (1992: 253), *Zeitraffer* is translated as 'time-lapse camera'. Because I am not satisfied with the translation here, I use the original concept.
124 More commonly, calendar and clock-time appear to represent 'real time', a view that is in opposition with Benjamin's temporal idea. The idea of counting time is naturally very old, and most of the Chinese, Indian or Egyptian cultures, developed their own ways of keeping time that were based on the leading religious doctrines. In Western culture, the history of the experience of time is as well originating in religion, but also in the development of philosophy and the natural sciences. It is evident that in the course of Western history, the changes in cosmological views, and the discoveries by the natural science have changed the understanding of cosmic, historical and human time (on the experience of time and space in Western intellectual context, see e.g. Fraser 1992 or Burckhardt, 1994).
125 Arendt 1992: 18-19.
126 Cf. Adorno 2.8.1935, Br. 672-675. Benjamin's implicit temporalisation of the concepts seemed to develop throughout the course of the 1930s, and was especially crystallised in Das Passagen-Werk fragments, which were probably written after Adorno's critique. It is also worth noting, that the closeness of Benjamin's temporal vocabulary to the concept of experience, which was one of the major issues in Benjamin's early work, was only effectively present in his last works (1939b, 1940). On the specifics of Benjamin's dialectical image and its temporality, see the chapter *Dialectical Image*, in the third part of this work.
127 Lindroos, 1993: 74. I characterise this as the situation, in which the ideas of Kairos and Chronos time 'meet' in the field of political action.
128 Hegel, 1955: "*Weltgeschichte, Enzyklopädie de philosophischen Wissenschaften*, I wish to include two notions from Hegel in connection to this. The first one is of his Encyclopädie, in which Hegel signifies time as Chronos: Die Zeit ist eben so continuirlich wie der Raum, denn sie ist eben die Abstract auf sich beziehende Negativität. In der Zeit, sagt man, entsteht und vergeht alles, denn sie ist eben die Abstraction des Entstehens und Vergehens selbst(...). Wenn von Allem, nämlich der Erfüllung der Zeit eben so von der Erfüllung des Raums abstrahiert wird, so bleibt die leere Zeit wie der leere Raum übrig.(...)Und nicht in ihr, sondern die Zeit selbst ist dies werden, Entstehen und Vergehen, dies seyende Abstrahireren, der Alles ebährende und seine Geburten zerstörende Chronos." (Hegel, 1827/1989: 192-193, § 258) The other background of Benjamin's critique is in Hegel's understanding of history as *Weltgeschichte,* in which the spirit (Geist) is interpreted as developing towards its freedom (see Hegel, 1830/1955: *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, esp. 149-184).
129 *Herrschaft der Totalität über die einzelnen Momente,* Lukács 1923: 22.
130 Benjamin included the idea of Leibnizian monad relating to the idea of the discontinuity of history already in thinking about the work of art and aesthetics, cf. the letter for Rang in 1923 (Br 322), which is discussed in *Early idea of the Work of Art.*
131 Leibniz 1975: e.g. 11: "... daß die natürlichen Veränderungen der Monaden von einem inneren Prinzip herrühren, da eine äußere Ursache auf ihr Inneres keinen Einfluß haben kann." (cf. Benjamin 1940: 14, 17).
132 Cf. Benjamin 1919/1965: 20 and the discussion on the identity and non-identity in GS VI, 27. The Benjaminian view includes the aspect of modern shock-experiences

which are discussed widely in the 1980s and in the context of the 'sublime' (see Bresemann, 1983).

133 Hegel 1827/1989: 192-193, quoted above.

134 Cf. Osborne 1994: 84.

135 This is very common nowadays, as marginal groups are webbing their 'scattered' histories together, like for instance the feminist writing of history, or cultural, racial or sexual minorities constructing their own histories. Benjamin pays attention to the fact that when these histories become established and further mediated to 'future generations', the problem is how to avoid the negative side of transferred meanings in the continuity of power.

136 As I noted in the introduction to this chapter, in the letter to Gretel Adorno Benjamin reveals that the 17th Thesis presents this method (see the letter to Gretel Adorno, e.g. GS 1.3. 1226).

137 Yet, I see this principle more as an inspirational than a rigorous method. On the political and aesthetic reflections in Russian avant-garde, see also 1927 a,b and *Moskauer Tagebuch* (1980).

138 *Russia: An Architecture for World Revolution,* 1984: 25-30.

139 Petric 1987: 7. See also the chapter, *Politicising Cult and Ritual in Film.* All in all, the project of the Russian avant-garde was still kept alive by Lunatcharski's rule, but it wasted away under Stalin's cultural policy.

140 Kambas 1986: 88-90.

141 Agamben 1993: 105.

142 Heller 1993: 68.

143 Focillon: *Vie des formes,* Paris 1934: 18; after Benjamin, GS I.3: 1229.

144 Koselleck 1988b: 42-46.

145 Bolz 1980: 59-60.

146 McCole 1993: 247.

NOTES TO PART II

1 More accurately, Benjamin writes: "Und ich kann jetzt behaupten, daß es die materialistische Theorie der Kunst, von der man viel hatte reden hören, die aber noch niemand mit eigenen Augen gesehen hatte, nun gibt ."(GS VI: 814)

2 Cf. F.T. Marinetti, *Manifeste technique de la littérature futuriste* (1912) *L'Imagination sans fils et les mots en liberté* (1913); André Breton, *Manifeste du Surrealisme – Poisson soluble* (1914 and 1929).

3 However, the single artists seemed to be more important than the groups. Benjamin mostly praised Klee, Chagall and Kandinsky in his letters, and they also remained as more or less implicit figures in the background of Benjamin's essays on art.

4 See the letter to Gr. Adorno April 1940, GS 1.3: 1226-27.

5 Peter Osborne characterises this temporal experience as an 'avant-garde experience', which Benjamin begins to thematize after 1927; he also calls Benjamin's concept of this experience as a "political temporalization of history" (Osborne 1994b: 61). Also, for my concern, these terms describe in a crystallised way the essential contents of Benjamin's temporal turn towards the present time.

6 Benjamin finished writing the work on Bachofen mainly in bed, because of both bad social and weather conditions. Additionally he wrote it during the time that he began to suffer from intellectual and emotional isolation (Br. 637, 640, 646).

7 On the more clear image of Benjamin's economic situation, especially after 1933, see Benjamin-Scholem *Briefwechsel*. On ironical notions on the institute, as Scholem seemed to be sceptical of Benjamin's attachment to it from the beginning, see e.g. 170-171; 202-204.

8 The essay was *L'oeuvre d'art a l'époque de la reproduction mécanisée* (ZfS Heft 1/1936: 40-66).

9 For Benjamin, the 'original' could be said to be the second version of the essay, which is published now in GS VII.1. This is the version, on which I base this interpretation. For more about the history of its writing, see GS VII.2: 661-690, also the synopsis on the similarities and differences between the various versions, GS VII.2: 682.

10 As Benjamin wrote to Scholem on 29.3. 1936, he was not too optimistic about the German publication (Benjamin-Scholem *Briefwechsel* 1985: 214). On the Kunstwerk in progress, esp. GS VII.2: 671-682.

11 About the relationships of the major participants of the old debate on Benjamin contra or pro others in the 'Frankfurt School', see e.g. Jay 1973: Ch. 6: Buck-Morss 1977, Lunn 1982.

12 Arendt 1971: 16. See also Brecht *Arbeitsjournal*. 1. Bd: 16. This view also became the obstacle in Benjamin's pursuit to publish the longer and German version of the essay in *Das Wort*.

13 The reason why I mainly exclude the originally published French version is because of many editorial disputes and cuttings (see GS I: 982 ff.; GS VII.2: 661 ff.). I do not want to neglect the 1939 version of the text, however, the 1936 version includes issues that were later deleted, that for my concern are also helpful in understanding the later text from another perspective.

14 The role and importance of the concept in the philosophy and theory of art was already expressed in Benjamin's dissertation on the concept of the art *critique* (see 1919: 110).

15 The issues I shall discuss here would become more heterogeneous if I could study his works on *Trauerspiel* and *Wahlverwandtschaften* in a detailed manner. Yet, I chose to restrict myself to the *Kunstwerk*-essay with the reasons outlined in the *Introduction*.

16 Naturally, there are several books dealing with comparisons of Benjamin to Adorno or Heidegger. See e.g. A. Benjamin 1994, Buck Morss 1977, Bowie 1977, Caygill 1994.

17 Secondary literature, like Gasché 1994 and Caygill 1998, have convincingly showed Benjamin's strong, although implicit and critical bond to Kant's thinking. On Benjamin-Hegel relation, see e.g. Gagnebin 1978.

18 "Es handelt sich bei Kant weniger um die Geschichte als um gewisse geschichtliche Konstellationen von ethischem Intresse. Und noch dazu wird gerade die ethische Seite der Geschichte als einer besondern Betrachtung unzugänglich hingestellt und das Postulat einer naturwissenschaftlichen Betrachtungsweise und Methode aufgestellt." (Br. 161) In May 1918 Benjamin gives up on Kant, unsatisfied with his cons-

tant emphasis on ethos and logos: "Er hetzt besonders in seinen späteren Schriften und schlägt besinnungslos auf seinen Renner, den Logos, ein." (Br. 187)

19 Gasché 1994: 184.

20 Cf. Gasché, 1994: 184.

21 The only major moral commitment that an individual should have, as Benjamin expresses within discussing Kafka's work, is towards his or her own time. Eine höchste moralische "Aufgabe des Menschen: die Zeit auf seine Seite zu bringen." (Benjamin GS II: 1199) On the moral question, see also VI: 54-93)

22 Gasché 1994: 183.

23 On the relation between aura and experience (*Erfahrung*) e.g. 1939a: XI.

24 I quote here the *zweite Fassung* 1933.

25 Benjamin discusses the connection between single work and universal history also in letters to Rang, which are an interesting and concretising link to his question of history in general, and art in singular. For more on this, see the next subchapter, *The Early Idea of the Work of Art.*

26 "Seit Bakunin hat es in Europa keinen radikalen Begriff von Freiheit mehr gegeben. Die Surrealisten haben ihn. Sie sind die ersten, das liberale moralisch-humanistisch verkalkte Freiheitsideal zu erledigen..."(1929: 306, see also 307-309)

27 For Benjamin, this timelessness primarily means the non-chronological understanding of time, which I have interpreted in this work as his cairologic approach to time. The artwork itself is seen as contingent and varying in the historical constellation and interpretations, and the temporal interpretation concerning the works of art and their relation to each other should be done by the art critique.

28 See letter to Scholem 1930, Br. 505-507. About Benjamin's task as a critique, Caygill 1998, esp. chapter on *Speculative Critique*.

29 *Goethes Wahlverwandtschaften*. The essay was published in *Neue deutsche Beiträge* in 1924 by the reference of Hugo von Hoffmansthal. Since Hoffmanstahl discovered the originality of Benjamin's thinking, he also supported the publication of his *Trauerspiel* book, which came out in 1928. The correspondence and friendship between them lasted until Hoffmanstahl's death in 1929 which was understandably hard for Benjamin, as was the loss of his other important friend, Florens Christian Rang in 1924.

30 Leibniz 1975: 9,11. Benjamin 1940: XIV, XVII.

31 Howard Caygill skilfully elaborates the development of this search for reconciliation between experience and knowledge in Benjamin's idea of freedom and its destiny, and how it runs into a 'dead end' in Benjamin's *Zur Kritik der Gewalt.* In this 1921 essay, the freedom and experience become characterised as the anarchist idea of freedom in immediate violence, as Benjamin follows Sorel's *Reflections of violence* from 1919. Caygill traces the new concept of experience as emerging in Benjamin's reflection on the experience of modernity, and his texts after 1933, especially *Erfahrung und Armut*, gather the various issues from earlier works into a more fruitful concept of experience (Caygill 1998: 23-33).

32 The critique mainly concerns Hermann Cohen's book, *Kant's Theorie der Erfahrung*, which Benjamin and Scholem read together in the summer of 1918.

33 As Benjamin emphasises, when discussing the concepts, one should pay attention to their own histories of transformation. For him, the terminology has the potential to become material for the new and not to repeat the past (Cf. GS VI: 93-94).

34 "Denn eine objektive Beziehung zwischen empirischem Bewußtsein und dem objektiven Begriff von Erfahrung ist unmöglich." (1918: 162)

35 The critique of universal or unifying knowledge, as well as the universalistic notion of 'reason', which in the contemporary philosophy became widely discussed by thinkers like Lyotard or Rorty, draws from elements that are discussed among German Romantic thinkers and in the Romantic critique of Enlightenment universalism (see for instance Bowie 1997: esp. Chapter I). Having studied Schlegel and Fichte and their controversy, Benjamin also finds in their philosophy some reflective substance on his critique of the Kantian system.

36 E.g. Caygill claims, that Benjamin attempted to follow Marx in the *method* rather than in the ideological content of the essay. The starting point of Marxist analysis is important, but as, for instance, becomes obvious in Adorno's critique, it may also become restricting.

37 In *Illuminations,* the translator uses Ralph Mannheim's translation of the Valéry-quotation. In this version it says *....an amazing change in our very notion of art*, and the concept *(Begriff)* has changed into a *notion.*

38 Brecht, *Dreigroschenprozess* 1931: 301-302; Benjamin 1939c: 484. During the time while he was writing the *Kunstwerk,* Benjamin also commented on Brecht, especially his *Epic Theatre.* The comments are collected in *Versuche über Brecht* (1981).

39 In the first version (GS I.2: 435) the concepts mentioned were *Schöpfertum und Genialität, Ewigkeitswert und Stil, Form und Inhalt.* About the discussion on Benjamin's conceptual politics, see Düttmann 1994.

40 Cf. Tiedemann 1983a: 21, and my introductory chapter *Critique and Creation of the Concepts.*

41 Benjamin considers technology as a historical question, which adds another dimension to his essay as a possible commentary to Heidegger's *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes* from 1935. But as in Benjamin, technology marks a rupture in tradition, which might open a new perspective to temporal dimensions of the past and the present. For Heidegger, technology marks the erasure in a configuration of world and earth, and for him technology is more a threat to the tradition of art than a potentiality to re-temporalize it (on the comparison, Caygill 1994: 22-27).

42 The essay 1937 also shows the passage from *Kunstwerk* towards the *Theses,* while many of the text fragments included in the *Theses,* were originally published in Fuchs essay (e.g. 1937: 467-469).

43 Here, Benjamin mainly discusses the work of Novalis, whose words "Die Wahrnehmbarkeit...ist eine Aufmerksamkeit describe", according to Benjamin, the perceptibility as aura, which means the ability to answer one's gaze. This is the idea Benjamin uses in describing the aura and its disappearance in the photograph (1931: 375-380). On the other hand Benjamin discusses Proust here, and he thought Proust to be an exemplary poet especially in using the aura in his work as creating distance.

44 The moment of mystery and secrecy is also included in language, as creating a distance mainly in poetic work, as Benjamin quotes Karl Kraus: "Je näher man ein Work ansieht, desto ferner sieht es zurück." (after Benjamin, 1939a: 647) In my view, Benjamin's attempt to emphasise the concepts that create mystery and cultic distance is essentially included in poetic language itself. However, in the social connections, the auratic elements should be made clear, as is, or should be, the task of

Marxist aesthetics. This is yet another ambiguity in Benjamin's concept of aura. This nuance of making the cultic element of the poetic/auratic language *transparent* has not survived in the English translation (cf. *Illuminations* 1992: 184). Additionally, I would like to remark that the concept of the 'cult' *(Kult)* is translated as *ceremonial* in *Illuminations*.

45 This adds a further dimension to Benjamin's critique of positivism. Due to its reductionism, the positivistic idea of science was, according to Benjamin, only able to recognise progress in the natural sciences, not the regression that it caused in the human sciences (*Fortschritte der Naturwissenschaft, nicht die Rückschritte der Gesellschaft*, 1937: 374).

46 For Schlegel, the issue was to construct a higher poetic sphere *(Universalpoetik)* by the reflective reconciliation of nature and reason. Pace Benjamin, Schlegel's and Novalis' ideas of the transcendence, in which the poetic would be raised higher *(steigert)*, was based on the idea of reflection (1919: 93). I interpret Benjamin's idea of dialectics as having a deep relation with the early romantic idea of reflection, although he later included the social level, and his concept of dialectics partly merged with Marxist dialectics (cf. chapters *Reversed Dialectics and Dialectics at a Standstill*).

47 In his article (1996) Samuel Weber also uncovers the literal meanings of Benjamin's original concepts, which show the content of the *Kunstwerk*-essay more accurately in the English discussion.

48 One example of the new creation is the reproduction of Auguste Rodin's work, *The Gates of Hell*, in the national Gallery in Washington. Rodin had left *The Gates* unfinished as of his death in 1918. They were recreated in 1981, and as such, they were called "a real original" on the basis of the rights that Rodin left to the French nation (Krauss 1996: 151-157). In her interpretation and comments on the exhibition, Krauss raises an interesting and in these terms Benjaminian question discussing the originality, repetition and reproduction of the avant-garde. It is especially interesting to read the dispute between Krauss and professor Elsen on the terms of 'originality' of Rodin's work, which also shifts the philosophical issue towards questions of legality or ethical authority (ibid: 171-194).

49 "Der fertige Film ist nichts weniger als eine Schöpfung aus einem Wurf, er ist aus sehr vielen einzelnen Bildern und Bildfolgen montiert, zwischen denen der Monteur die Wahl hat – Bildern, die im übrigen von vornherein in der Folge der Aufnahmen bis zum endgültigen Gelingen beliebig zu verbessern gewesen waren." (1936a: 362)

50 Cf. Krauss 1996: 205.

51 On Benjamin's comparison between photo and painting, see *Pariser Brief II*.

52 In the 'post Benjaminian' period, reproducibility has a multiple affect on making art that is impossible to reproduce, for instance, the performance art, based on unique and momentaneous performance. Reproducibility has also created a form to make art explicitly out of reproductions, as in Andy Warhol's work. The gap between the first moment of reproduction and art composed of reproductions has not been closed, but rather has produced further approaches to art, such as simulacra and electronic or multi-media art, in which the original is no longer an issue or possible to find, and these artforms are based on the interactive and recreating relationship between an aesthetic object and subject. Consequently, originality has also gained new meanings in a material sense, which are objects of rarity and investment.

53 An often emphasised example of the 'politics of photography' is the portrayal of history as a bit different that 'it actually was' through the old Soviet photographs, from which the ideologically non-favourable ex-members of the communist party had simply vanished in later reproductions. Also, the way in which the public identity is constructed via official photography becomes obvious if one confronts the photos of the same people in their private surroundings. For instance, the portrait photos by Henri Cartier-Bresson are illustrating the difference between official and private identity of political and artistic 'leaders' during this century.

54 For Adorno, the possibility to record classical pieces of music was the only positive factor he could see in the reproduction. It is well-known, especially when Benjamin's essay is compared to Horkheimer's and Adorno's *Dialectics of Enlightenment* (1944), that their views on the impact of the reproduction technique are almost opposed to each other. Yet the approximate 10 year time difference between the works, as well as the contextual change from Germany to America, already shows a different impact on art, caused by the reproduction.

55 Bowie 1997: 212.

56 This notion was not present in the two other versions. Instead, in the other versions, the aura is described as the unity *(Einzigkeit)* of the work of art (cf. 1936a 356). About the importance of reading the different versions of the essay as well as marking the influence of Horkheimer's editing for the published essay, see e.g. Caygill 1998: 98.

57 "Was ist eigentlich Aura? Ein sonderbares Gespinst aus Raum und Zeit; einmalige Erscheinung einer Ferne, so nah sie sein mag. An einem Sommernachmittag ruhend einem Gebirgszug am Horizont oder einem Zweig folgen, der sein Schatten auf den ruhenden wirft – das heißt die Aura dieser Berge, dieses Zweiges atmen." (1936a: 355)

58 Benjamin describes aura as the 'cover' *(Hülle),* under which the uniqueness of the work of art is covered (1936a: 368, cf. 1922: 195).

59 Benjamin persistently uses the concept of fascism in the essay, also in the places, in which he more specifically describes the German Nazi praxis. In some parts, especially in the discussion on the aesthetics, I have changed his 'fascism' to 'Nazism'.

60 "Die ursprüngliche Art des Einbettung des Kunstwerks in den Traditionszusammenhang fand ihren Ausdruck im Kult. Die ältesten Kunstwerke sind, wie wir wissen, im Dienst eines Rituals entstanden, zuerst eines magischen, dann eines religiösen. Es ist nun von entscheidener Bedeutung, daß dieser auratische Daseinsweise des Kunstwerks niemals durchaus von seiner Ritualfunktion sich löst." (1936a: 356)

61 Bürger 1974: 36, 42.

62 What Benjamin calls here the mythos of perception, psychoanalytical theory stresses as the development of vision and perception, as the individual becomes conscious of the distinctions between the other and the self. Photographic techniques, such as close-ups and montage are the starting points in revealing other layers in constructing an individual, which leads also to the different formations of a subject, as the other is reflected via the screen. Benjamin describes this through the comparison between the camera and psychoanalysis, as they both penetrate the unconscious; the camera penetrates the unconscious optics and psychoanalysis the unconscious impulses (1931: 371).

In psychoanalytic theory, new constructions of a subjective identity is described, for instance, through the mirror-phase, outlined by Lacan. The mirror reflects a subject in space in a more immediate way than a photograph. In a Lacanian sense (1977: 2-19) the mirror produces the illusionary unity of the image, as an ideal model of the subject. The visual perception explains something about the alienated ego, which is already alienated in the infant's earliest mirror-stage as an infant reflects itself through the mirror in which the outer world uses to show it its image. According to Lacan, this image is already illusionary, constituted by social and cultural reflections. Interestingly, Lacan sees the mirror appearance *(Gestalt)* as not only showing the subject an image of its own body in a visualised exteriority, but also as duplicating the environment, placing real and virtual space in continuous relations. So, the mirror-image becomes the threshold of the visible world (Lacan 1977: 3). Lacanian psychoanalysis combined with Althusserian Marxism have had a strong impact on later, especially Anglo-American, film-theory around the 1970's and developed through the editorial politics of the *Screen* (cf. Rodowick 1997: xii).

63 Shapiro 1988: 129.

64 Contemporarily, this Benjaminian 'crisis' is well-used in creating a subdiscipline in political science, namely, the production of the political images of the analysis of media rhetoric.

65 Cf. McQuire 1997: 237.

66 Tristan Tzara, Proclamation without Pretension. In: *Seven Dada Manifestos*, 1924.

67 As described in connection to Benjamin's idea of history, mythology stands opposite of Benjamin's idea of temporality. For instance, the *Passagen-Werk*, intended to find a way out of historical mythology in the space of history: "...geht es hier um Auflösung der 'Mythologie' in den Geschichtsraum." (PW: 571)

68 "Still. Ich will, wo keiner noch hindurchgegangen ist, hindurchgehen, still! Nach ihnen, liebste Sprache." (Breton, after Benjamin 1929: 297). The Surrealists, especially Breton, found in Freud's psychoanalysis a corresponding theory to vivify the non-discursive sphere, expressed by automatic writing.

69 See also Osborne's interpretation 1994b: 67-68.

70 Cf. Scholem 1963: 24-25.

71 The idea of profane illumination could also be interpreted as materialising the ways of experiencing in Benjamin's ideal types of modernity, such as collector, Flaneur or thinker, all of them who could, parallel to some artists, be able to destroy the idea of the temporal routine of the everyday and fill it with experiences, which I refer to as recognising the cairotic moments (cf. 1929: 297-300).

72 See Michael Löwy's interpretation in *Radical Philosophy*, 80/1996.

73 Cf. Weigel 1992: 49 ff.

74 Weigel 1996: 10.

75 Weigel 1996: 10 -18.

76 Cf. Lister 1995: 18-19.

77 Nagel 1980: 81 ff.

78 In *Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire*, Benjamin characterises the durability of experience *(Erfahrung)* in the sense that it is only possible for a poet to be a subject of such unified experience: " 'Matière et mémoire' bestimmt das Wesen der Erfahrung in der durée derart, daß der Leser sich sagen muß: einzig der Dichter wird das adequate Subjekt einer solchen Erfahrung sein." (1939a: 609) The dilemma that emer-

ges here, is that during the modern times, the art of experience, according to Benjamin's claim, transforms into *Erlebnisse* instead of *Erfahrungen* (1933c, 1939a). This also means a loss of poetry in the sense of Poe, Baudelaire or Valéry, since poetry loses the sphere of unified experiences. The reason why Baudelaire fascinated Benjamin as a poet, is that he had the ability to write from the unified sphere of experiences, although he lived in the middle of modernity and city-life. This made Baudelaire a poet *par excellence.* The mass issue, in relation to the poetic work was interesting for Benjamin, since the modern poets did not explicitly 'show' the mass in the text, but instead concentrated on the individual, leaving the invisible crowd in the background. In Benjamin's words, it was the *Flaneur,* here as a poet, who gave the soul to the crowd (1939a: 618). In a way, this idea of crowd *(Menge)* remains, in-between Benjamin's conceptions of the proletarian and petty bourgeois masses.

79 This image of the leader in distracted mass could be compared to Weber's idea of the charismatic political leader, in which the idea of the political leadership is practised by vocation (Beruf), and not only practised by authoritarian or legal reasons (Weber 1919/ 1988: esp. 507-509).

80 I shall return to the issue in *Politicising Cult and Ritual in Film.*

81 "Er (der Faschismus, kl) weiß: je kompakter die Massen sind, die er auf die Beine bringt, desto mehr Chance, daß die konterrevolutionären Instinkte des Kleinbürgertums ihre Reaktionen bestimmen. Das Proletariat seinerseits aber bereitet eine Gesellschaft vor, in der weder die objektiven noch die subjektiven Bedingungen zur Formierung von Massen mehr vorhanden sein werden." (1936a: 371)

82 Alternative 1980: 85.

83 "Unter den gesellschaftlichen Funktionen des Films ist die wichtigste, das Gleichgewicht zwischen dem Menschen und der Apparatur herzustellen." (1935: 460 cf. 1927b: 752)

84 For instance for a Finnish audience, the grey and simple surroundings of everyday life 'blew up' in consciousness after seeing some of the Kaurismäki-films around the 1980's. It was not only the reality that looked different after being mediated through the screen; it was also the amazement of the international audience that offered a response to these somewhat obscure and minimalist films. Especially if these films were viewed abroad, the idea of Finland as a culture underwent a slight perceptual change.

85 Cf. *Dialectics of Enlightenment* 1944/1997: 120 and ff.

86 Adorno 1979, Schriften 15: 11-13.

87 Cf. Benjamin 1930.

88 Following the cinematographic examples that Benjamin uses, I would claim that he saw the majority of films shown in the exhibition *Film und Photo*, in Stuttgart in 1929. During the time 1926/27 when he was in Moscow, he saw Eisenstein's, as well as Dziga Vertov's and Esfira Schub's films, although, as he claims in the beginning of *Zur Lage der Russischen Filmkunst* (1927), it was easier to see the good Russian films in Berlin than in Moscow. Benjamin was also a link in organising Sigrid Kracauer's viewing of Russian films during his visit to Moscow. As a result, Kracauer wrote a positive review about Vertov and his *ciné-eye* in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and his films were also shown later in Berlin (cf. Lacis 1976: 67).

89 Nagel in Alternative 1980: 85.

90 Deleuze interprets Vertov's relation to machines as having a 'heart', and they "revolved, trembled, jolted and threw out flashing and lightning as the man could do" (Deleuze 1997: 39).

91 A similar difference is also marked by Deleuze as he discusses the French School of montage. According to him, in the pre-war French School, an epic or tragic element is substituted for the comic or dramatic element. In this, the French are distinguished from the Soviets, who incessantly filmed 'energy machines'. As for the Soviets, the man and machine formed an active dialectical unity, which transcended the opposition between mechanical work and the direction of the movement of the soul (Deleuze 1997: 42).

92 "Der Film: Auswicklung (...) aller Anschauungsformen, Tempi und Rhytmen, die in den heutigen Machinen präformiert liegen, dergestalt daß alle Probleme der heutigen Kunst ihre endgültige Formulierung nur im zusammenhänge des Films finden." (PW: 498) It was interesting that the new experiments with the photography and film, in which the camera was considered to replace the eye in a mechanical way *(Kamera-Auge)*, mainly happened in Germany and Russia. Two of the exceptions were Man Ray and Florence Henri in Paris. On the history, see e.g. Willett, 1981, especially the chapter 15: *Das Auge: Neue Photografie, der russische Film und Avantgardefilme, or Die Stationen der Moderne – Austellungskataloge,* which illustrates the most important art exhibitions in Germany from 1911 *(Blaue Reiter)* until 1969 *(Fernsehgalerie Berlin)*.

93 Vertov's work has influenced such film directors as Jean Rouch, Roberto Rossellini, Jean-Luc Godard, Satyajit Ray, Andrej Wajda and Bruce Conner. Vertov was also connected to SU leading avant-garde movements of the 1920's such as futurism, formalism, suprematism, and he was inspired by Mayakovsky's journal LEF, and also his poetic works.

94 According to Petric 1987: see 3-5.

95 Deleuze 1997: 40

96 *The Kino-eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov* 1984 (cf. Deleuze 1997: 80-81; *Imagining Reality* 1996: 51 -56).

97 Deleuze 1997: 82.

98 Cf. the chapter *Construction of History,* which outlines Benjamin's method for the *Theses.*

99 Cf. Deleuze 1997 1: 81.

100 Deleuze 1997 1: 81. Deleuze also shows Vertov's difference to French directors, who during the same era primarily showed the spiritual aspect of cinema. For Vertov, superimposition was the expression of the interaction between distant material points and high speed and slow motion, the differential of physical movement. French directors also provided a 'liquid image', which showed human perception as going beyond its own limits and movement, and discovered the spiritual totality that it expressed. For Vertov, the liquid image was too inaccurate to reach the particle of the matter.

101 Unfortunately, it is impossible to go into greater detail here on the cinematic history of the 1920's and 1930's, than presented through these brief examples from Soviet and German cinema. Parallel to Vertov, Walter Rüttmann's *Berlin – the Symphony of the Great City*, deserves the position of both as avant-gardian and extra-

ordinary as Vertov, and is also an exception in the German cinema of that time. Berlin is a chronological progression of around 18 hours of city life, and it also was presented in Stuttgart *Film und Photo Ausstellung* in 1929. As Vertov, Rüttmann does not use a human protagonist and he shows the city itself as the protagonist, as it is presented rhythmically and the film includes no continuous narrative. To the series of 'city symphonies', belongs also Alberto Cavalcanti's *Rien que les heures* (1926) and Mikhail Kaufman's Moscau (1927). Kaufman was Vertov's brother, and often also the source of inspiration and the 'cameraman' of his films.

102 Cf. *The Short History of the Movies* 1996: 155-159.

103 Kracauer 1987: 89-90.

104 Cf. Deleuze 1997:13-14.

105 Deleuze 1997: 52.

106 Instead, Lang's wife Thea von Harbou, who had written the manuscript of *Metropolis,* took the position of writing Nazi films after Lang fled from Germany. Yet shortly after, she was replaced by Leni Riefenstahl.

107 Cf. Kracauer 1995: the title essay.

108 In *Theorien der deutschen Faschismus* Benjamin gave a certain metaphoric meaning to the repeating motive of a landscape as a binding idea between the German idealism and nationalism: "Im Angeschichte der total mobil gemachten Landschaft hat das deutsche Naturgefühl einen ungeahnten Aufschwung genommen. Die Friedensgenien (...) sind evakuiert worden und so weit man über den Grabenrand blicken konnte, war alles Umliegende zum Gelände des deutschen Idealismus selbst geworden (...) und der Himmel darüber bei Tag dies kosmische Innenseite des Stahlhelms, bei Nacht das sittliche Gesetz über dir. Mit Feuerbändern und Laufgräben hat die Technik die heroischen Züge im Antlitz des deutschen Idealismus nachziehen wollen. Sie hat geirrt." (1930: 247)

109 Cf. Gasché 1994: 198.

110 Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe 1990: 297.

111 Benjamin worked with the *Kunstwerk* until the year 1939, but the ideas of fascist aesthetics are more compact in *Pariser Brief* than in the *Kunstwerk.* Although the ideas are presented briefly and in connection with the review of Gide's work, in the letter to Scholem (4.4.1937, Br. 730), Benjamin calls the *Pariser Brief* as ein *Essay über faschistische Kunsttheorie.*

112 "Die Summe ihrer Privilegien als 'die Kultur' vorzustellen, darin erblickt er seine besondere Aufgabe." (1936c: 486)

113 The essay was originally written as review of the Collection of essays *Krieg und Krieger*, edited by Ernst Jünger, published in *Die Gesellschaft* 7 (1930) Vol. 2.

114 Filippo Marinetti, *The Futurist Manifesto in Le Figaro*, 20.2. 1909.

115 van Reijen, Veerman 1988: *An Interview with Jean-François Lyotard* (1988: 296). Lyotard follows here Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe's *La Fiction du politique.*

116 Lyotard 1988: 296.

117 Lyotard 1988: 299.

118 *Theorien der deutschen Faschismus* (1930) is the review on *Krieg und Krieger*, (Hg.) Ernst Jünger.

119 Löwy 1996: 21.

120 In this chapter I use the parallel versions in GS VII.1. (1936a) and VII.2 (editorial

notes and variations of the 1936a), because as Benjamin so often excluded some parts of his writings, the meaning of the claims presented here can be better understood, if the two versions are treated as complementary.

121 "Durch seine Hülle, die nichts anderes als aura ist, scheint das schöne." (GS VII.2: 667)

122 Heidegger 1960/1935.

123 Seel 1993: 771-773.

124 Cf. Deleuze 1997: 79 ff.

125 Here, Benjamin uses the example of the 1924 Olympiads, when the Finnish national hero, Paavo Nurmi, won by running 'against the clocks' (1936a: 365).

126 E.g. Anthony Azis in *Image et politique* 1998: 28. On the wider discussion on the issue see e.g. *The photographic image in the digital culture*, 1995.

127 Wiesenthal 1971: 60 ff.

128 S. Weber 1996: 35-36.

129 An example of the 'auratic' art which uses cult motives, but still explicitly detaches itself from the bourgeois tradition, is Joseph Beuys' work.

130 About the figure of Mickey Mouse, see also *Erfahrung und Armut: Das Dasein von Micky-Mouse ist ein solcher Traum der heutigen Menschen. Dieses Dasein ist voller Wunder, die nicht nur technischen überbieten, sondern sich über sie lustig machen* (1933c: 218).

131 Cadava 1992; cf. Agamben 1993: Chapter *Ritual and Play.*

132 Cadava 1992: 89.

133 Cf. Cadava 1992: 90.

134 Cadava 1992: 100.

135 Cadava 1992: 85

136 For instance, Scholem writes about Benjamin's minimalism in his ambition to write a hundred lines into the single page of an ordinary notebook. This miniature form of writing can be admired in any hand-written document of Benjamin. Another example of Benjamin's minimalist ambition is his admiration for two grains of wheat in The Jewish section of the Museum of Cluny, of which he interpreted that a kindred soul had inscribed the complete Shema Israel (*Yearbook of the Leo Baeck Institute* 1965: 117. Quoted after Arendt's *Introduction to Illuminations* 1992: 17).

137 Benjamin also recognised the way in which the female figure was presented as an object of perception in the last century, which is included in the critique of Baudelaire, especially in *Zentralpark.* On Benjamin's notions on the female or the lesbian as sublime documents of the cultural context of the Weimar republic, see e.g. 1933d: 661; 666-667 and PW: e.g: 288.

138 On the city-images, see e.g. *Neapel* (1924), co-authored with Asja Lacis; Moskau (1927) or the review on Franz Hessel's *Heimliches* Berlin (1927). On the interpretation of Benjamin, city and space, see e.g. Gilloch 1996.

139 The first description of the *camera obscura* can be found by Leonardo da Vinci, as the images, or the *trompe l'oeuil* of the images were also used as a mechanical aid in painting (cf. Burckhardt 1994: 246-251).

140 Letter to Horkheimer 16.10 1935: Br. 690

141 Koch 1994: 207.

142 Koch 1994: 212.

143 Except Agamben 1993: 105.
144 Lister 1995: 2.
145 E.g. *Image et politique* 1998 or Diers 1998.
146 Virilio in *Image et politique* 1998: 21.
147 Cf. Lister 1995: 1.

NOTES TO PART III

1 Generally it might be possible to use the term 'imagology'. However, I reject the term because of the idea of image in 'imagology' is not compatible to Benjamin's concept of images, especially if imagology is used in a Marxist sense, as 'another form of ideology'. I consider Benjamin's approach to images to be closer to epistemology than ideology. The question is still interesting, if it is followed in the way that, for instance, Jon Simons follows it, into a confrontation between ideology and imagology (Simons, 1997). Here, William Mitchell's theory of an image is also worth noting, since, in order to discuss the 'image' at least in some terms, he makes the following theoretical distinction. *Firstly,* he emphasises how different connotations are given to images, whether they are thought to represent similarity or Mimesis. *Secondly,* he distinguishes the images into five sections, which are graphic images (paintings and statues), optical images (mirrors and reflections), perceptual image (the data received through visual sense), mental images (dreams, memories) and linguistic images (metaphors and descriptions) (Mitchell 1990: 19-20). Pace Mitchell, the 'family of images' consists of a wide variety of pictures, statues, optical illusions, maps, diagrams, dreams, hallucinations, poems, patterns, memories and ideas, which do not necessarily have anything in common with each other, as no systematic and unified understanding of 'an image' is possible. This point of view is also important for the social sciences, since the general discussion tends to reduce an image into a 'media or an advertising' image. In discussing Benjamin, we move basically in the sphere of mimesis, perception, mental images and linguistic images.

2 In philosophy, Ludwig Wittgenstein elaborated on the picture theory in his *Tractatus* (1921 1. German edition), but he generally abandoned it in his later work. Wittgenstein seemed to first develop a picture theory, and then attacked it in his later thinking, or, rather, he fought against its influence in the interpretation. At the same time, he tried to expel the notion of mental imagery along with its metaphysical baggage. Wittgenstein's claim was that the really important verbal image is that of the 'picture' in 'logical space' which is projected by a proposition. This was, however, misunderstood by logical positivists, as it was interpreted as "an immediate window on reality", as a fulfilment of the 17th century dream of a transparent language that would allow direct access to objects and ideas. Wittgenstein conceded that we may have mental images associated with thought or speech, and he insisted that these images should not be thought of as private, metaphysical immaterial entities, any more than the real images are (Wittgenstein 1921, see also *Blue and Brown Books* 1953).

3 A rough starting point of linguistic philosophy is in the 19th Century, in the philosophy of Gottlob Frege. Contemporarily, the idea of 'linguistic turn' combines several aspects, and its important culminating points are the structuralist approaches following Ferninand de Saussure's work from the beginning of this century, and

German especially Heidegger's philosophy and Gadamer's hermeneutic. In addition, the widely understood group of deconstructivists, such as Derrida (esp. *Of Grammatology*), and Anglo-American linguistic philosophy, originating in Wittgenstein, and leading to thinkers such as Quine, Davidson and Rorty, outline this 'linguistic turn'.

4 I have literally translated the concept *Denkbild* into thought-image, although it might be in need of a better conceptual replacement. One possible concept describing the idea of the *Denkbild* could be the *Noosign,* which Deleuze uses in the sense of "an image which goes beyond itself towards something which can only be thought" (Deleuze 1992: Glossary). The concept of *noetikos* refers to something spiritual, which is also familiar to thinking and spirit. Fraser calls Noozeit an age of the thinking human being (see Fraser 1992: e.g. 185 ff.).

5 Cf. Diers 1997: 165, who briefly discusses Benjamin's idea of the baroque emblems and how they return as commodified objects, in his own analysis of commercials. The modern and after-modern emblem is a photograph, which combines the archaic and mythical with the commercial ideology (on the comparison for instance of the historical and racial motives in Benetton's commercials, see Diers 1997: 165-170; Shapiro 1996: 19-31).

6 Sigrid Weigel lists the various contexts in which Benjamin's concept of image *(Bild)* appears: as a graphic image *(Schriftbild)* and dream image *(Traumbild),* as images of history *(Bilder der Geschichte)* and the mnemonic image *(Erinnerungsbild),* as thought-images *(Denkbilder)* and dialectical images *(dialektische Bilder)*. Weigel claims that all of the examples contain the basic concept of image in the background, which, aside from the controversy concerning the relationship between 'material and mental image', goes back to the original and literal sense of the word. The other images are such as likeness, similitude, or resemblance *(Ähnlichkeit* Weigel, 1996: 23). For more on Benjamin's concepts of images, see e.g. Buck-Morss 1990, Jennings 1987, Weigel 1996, Haverkamp's Critique in *diacritique* 1992. Other material for theoretical reflection on the image and time, is found, for instance in *Bildlichkeit* (Hg. Bohn) or *Plötzlichkeit* by von Bohrer.

7 There exists two slightly different texts on the same matter, both of which were written in 1933. *Lehre vom Ähnlichen* was the first version, *Über das mimetische Vermögen* was the second. I do not interpret the differences between them any further here. On the development of Benjamin's theory of language, see GS V.2: 795-796, which includes his own comparison of the theories of language from 1916 to 1933. On the language and its poetic appearance, see also *Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers* from 1923 and for more on his philosophy of language, *Probleme der Sprachsoziologie* 1935.

8 Cf. Rabinbach 1979: 61.

9 E.g. Habermas 1972: 204. Benjamin's anthropological idea of the development of the language is examined e.g. in Schwarz 1984.

10 Nietzsche *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches:* 11 (Werke I: 453).

11 Nietzsche *Zur Genealogie der Moral*: III 8. (Werke III: 851).

12 Cf. Rabinbach 1979: 61.

13 "Es ist nämlich gar nicht zu bezweifeln daß in dem Kantischen Erkenntnisbegriff die wenn auch sublimierte Vorstellung eines individuellen leibgeistigen Ich welches

mittelst der Sinne die Empfindungen empfängt und auf deren Grundlage sich seine Vorstellung bildet die größte Rolle spielt. Diese Vorstellung ist jedoch Mythologie und was ihren Wahrheitsgehalt angeht jeder andern Erkenntnismythologie gleichwertig." (1918: 161)

14 This transformation from the pre-rational form of mimesis towards the representation, is examined for instance in Foucault's *Les Mots et les choses* (1966/1990).

15 The connection between Benjamin's concept of experience and his theory of language is recognised and discussed by Habermas (see 1972: 202). However, in the next paragraph, Habermas claims that Benjamin's idea of language is onomatopoetic, which it is not (see Benjamin 1933b: 212).

16 Schwarz 1984: 54.

17 Rabinbach 1979: 62.

18 "Der historische Index der Bilder sagt nämlich nicht nur, daß sie einer bestimmten Zeit angehören, er sagt vor allem, daß sie erst in einer bestimmten Zeit zur Lesbarkeit kommen. Und zwar ist dieses "zur Lesbarkeit" gelangen ein bestimmter kritischer Punkt der Bewegung in ihrem Innern. Jede Gegenwart ist durch diejenigen Bilder bestimmt, die mit ihr synchronistisch sind: jedes Jetzt ist das Jetzt einer bestimmten Erkennbarkeit." (PW: 577-578; see also 1940: XIV) Discussing the 'readability' of an image, the idea could be compared to the concept *Lectosign,* that Deleuze uses in his *Cinema*-books. Lectosign means 'a visual image which must be 'read' as much as seen' (Deleuze: 1992, Glossary).

19 "Die Rede vom Buch der Natur weist darauf hin, daß man das Wirkliche wie einen Text lesen kann. So soll es hier mit der Wirklichkeit des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts gehalten werden. Wir schlagen das Buch des Geschehenen aus." (PW: 580)

20 As Benjamin connects here also the theological idea of time in the concepts of *Erlösung* and *Eingedenken,* is a detail worth noticing. However, having already discussed the theological aspect in the Theses I do not repeat the thematization here.

21 This connection also offers another perspective on the earlier discussed passage in the *Kunstwerk* in which Benjamin sees that with the emergence of new media, politicians must tackle the crisis of the representative democracy (see *Re-defining the cult*). In the theory of images, representation gains another meaning, as the earlier way to conceive of political action falls apart; this event forms a 'small catastrophe' in politics. The dialectical images are non-continuous but are reconstructed as a moment of critique in which the past (in practising politics) is confronted with the present moment. For instance the *Geistesgegenwart* is a condition that could be actualised in 'real' media politics, if the politician were to make 'use' of the present and its space of action. Instead, the media space is often used as a commentary, covering, rather than actualising action.

22 Cf. "...Daß man das wirkliche wie ein Text lesen kann, to read the reality like a text." (PW: 580)

23 "Jede geschichtliche Erkenntnis läßt sich im Bilde einer Waage, die einsteht, vergegenwärtigen und deren eine Schale mit dem Gewesnen, deren andere mit der Erkenntnis der Gegenwart belastet ist. Während auf der ersten die Tatsachen nicht unscheinbar und nicht zahlreich genug versammelt sein können, dürfen auf der zweiten nur einige wenige schwere, massive Gewichte liegen." (PW: 585)

24 One interpretation of the problem is found in Michel Foucault's book on René Magritte's art (see Foucault 1983: 19-31). The play between image and text was also typical in surrealist photography. Benjamin commented on this by referring to 'art-after-photography', and to the magazines and books that combine photography and text, such as Breton's *Nadja,* which was illustrated with Boiffard's images (cf. Benjamin 1929, 1936). The other experiments that added a political component to the text/image game were photo-montages by Raoul Hausmann, Hannah Höch and John Heartfield.

25 Caygill 1998: 80. Here, Caygill also discusses Benjamin's relevance to the discussion of image and experience, through painting and colours (80-89). According to Benjamin, painting in itself is a form of communication that is distinguished from philosophy (see Benjamin 1920: 113-114, and generally, his early letters to Scholem).

26 The translation in Caygill's book is: "perception is reading. Only that appearing in the surface is readable. (...) Surface that is configuration – absolute continuity." (Caygill 1998: 3) As Caygill correctly notes, the key to this fragment has to be deciphered by the interpreter him or herself. However, I would pay attention to the translation of the idea of *Zusammenhang* into 'continuity', and in this case, I would rather emphasise the conception of inter-connectedness than continuity, in the sense of bridging the various levels of the 'web' of this readable textum. The 'continuity', with its temporal connotation, might reverse Benjamin's intention (cf. also PW: 576-577).

27 Mitchell 1987: 42-44.

28 Here, Mitchell approaches Goodman's theory of symbols in *Languages of Art* (1976).

29 Throughout his work, by relating the idea of action to the communication *(Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns)*, Habermas is concerned about the distortion of communication in the era that might now be characterised as the 'media age'. In the early *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere,* Habermas roughly repeated the conclusions of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* and he saw the emergence of a public sphere as being threatened by the electronic media, which according to him, nullifies its democratic potentials. Habermas proposes the deliberative democracy as an antidote to imagology, which would revive the public sphere in a contemporary form and create a broader scope for communicative reasoning in politics (Habermas, e.g. 1989).

30 Cf. Poster 1996: 4-12.

31 Baudrillard e.g. 1988: 217; 1981: 169 ff.

32 On multi-media, e.g. Poster 1996, and e.g. his notion on Benjamin's thought considering the 'second media'(13-16). Hence, in interpreting Benjamin's view on media Poster uses the term technoculture in his own contemporary sense, which does not quite fit the Benjamin-analysis from the historical sense.

33 Seel 1993: 776-778.

34 Cf. McQuire 1998: 4-5, 15.

35 Deleuze 1992: 265.

36 Cf. Michael Shapiro 1988: 127-128.

37 Tagg 1988.

38 Foucault considers that architecture connects to politics and power since the 18th century. At that time, architecture was seen as aiming at realising governing techniques and the function of *gouvernamentalité*. The architectural difference between the ancient Greek and Roman empires was, according to Foucault, based on the idea of political order in public buildings. The old cities rarely had regular outlines in the houses and individual rooms. Geometrically planned cities were usually colonies, and they were also seen as artificially constructed. With the organisation of space emerged something that could be called the organised or modern control of the state (Rabinow, 1986). The organised space is also an example of the issues of the aestheticization of politics, which was discussed above through the formation and representation of a human collective in the extreme case of German Nazism.

39 Examples form the political and specifically feminist research on the visual representation could be mentioned the already classical studies of Pollock (1990) and Mulvay (1975), who focus on the way how the image of a woman is created and manipulated in the art history (Pollock) or cinema (Mulvay).

40 "Concerning the mémoire involontaire: its images do not only come without being called up; rather, they are images which we have never seen before we remember them. This is most clearly the case in those images in which – like in some dreams – we ourselves can be seen. We stand in front of ourselves, the way we might have stood somewhere in the prehistoric past, but never before our gaze. And it is in fact the most important images, those developed in the darkroom of the lived moment, that we get to see. One might say that our most profound moments have been furnished, like some cigarette packages, with a little image, a photograph of ourselves. And that 'whole life' which, as we often hear, passes before the dying of people in danger of dying, is composed precisely of those tiny images." (Benjamin, *Aus einer kleinen Rede über Proust*, GS II. 3. 1064)

41 The thought is outlined by the fact that Barthes wrote the book in memory of his mother.

42 Cf. Benjamin's *Short History of Photography,* especially his examples of the photos of David Octavious Hill. Benjamin discusses the interesting contrast that Hill represents, namely, to take a portrait photograph using landscapes or graveyard as their background. Especially the graveyard transforms in the photograph into an interior-like space (1931: 368-373).

43 In the political thought, one of the few theorists who emphasises birth in connection to historical action is Hannah Arendt. What is essential for her is that through acting, people create something new. The action understood as a *new beginning* and can be compared to the birth of somebody. Action creates an entry into the human and political world similarly as birth allows us entry into the physical world. For Arendt, in the more extensive context of history, the action is the creative factor; history is as variable as the actors in it, and it is impossible to edit or compose a universal entity of history (Arendt 1970: 82-87; 1981: 164 ff.)

44 *Sinn von Sein,* Heidegger 1928/1986: 19.

45 Consequently, it has been discussed for instance in feminist critique, that the experience of finitude and the taboo of death is becoming one of the characterising figures in the temporal consciousness of the end of the 20th century. According to femi-

nist theorists, such as Irigaray, Heidegger's *Sein-zum-Tode* signifies the masculine approach to time which is rejected by feminist writers as an inappropriate perspective on both, human temporality and the human relationship to nature. The Heideggerian approach excludes the centrality of birth from his concept of human temporality and ignores it also as the time-creating capacity.

46 Here, I do not claim, that the cinematic image would necessarily be in the present, nor that the present is the *only* time for the cinema. It is interesting that, for instance, Deleuze's discussion on the time-image in his *Cinema 2,* has almost an aggressive view against defining the time-image as necessarily that of the present (Deleuze 1992: e.g. 35-39; 279). The aggressive attitude results, in my opinion, from the restricted conception of the present. The restricted idea excludes the extension into the repeating reflection between a film and its perception, which cannot be separated in the concept of the film as an 'Image-space'.

47 Naturally, Benjamin is far from being the only one who has noted the change of the temporal-spatial conditions of perception. See, for example, Virilio 1985.

48 Generally, I do not wish to discuss the accurateness of Deleuze's film-interpretations in the context of any leading and competing trade of film-theory (on this subject, see Rodowick 1997: esp. Preface).

49 Deleuze 1997 1: XIV. Here, I would interpret the 'we' as referring foremostly to Deleuze himself.

50 Cf. Deleuze 1997: 56-59

51 I interpret Deleuze's concept *lectosign* "to read above and besides the written", as having basically the same meaning as Benjamin's adopted idea of the *Schrift.*

52 Deleuze 1997: 38.

53 The information sources for the following short biography are the *International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers 2,* 1991; *World Film Directors* 1988. Volume Two 1945-1985; the WWW-pages; Chris Marker, 1996. *La Jetée ciné-roman.* The book version of the science fiction film.

54 For instance, Marker scripted *Les statues meurent aussi* with Resnais. This film was made in 1953, but it was banned for a decade.

55 English Title: "The Jetty." 1962 (released 1964). Director Chris Marker; Main Actors: Hélène Chatelain, Davos Hanich, Jacques Ledoux. Still Photography Jean Chibaud; Photography Chris Marker; Script Chris Marker; Editing Jean Ravel; Producer Anatole Dauman; Production Company Argos Films; Running time 28 minutes. Black & white.

56 The 1995 film *Twelve Monkeys* is directed by Terry Gilliam (screenplay by David and Janet Peoples) was, as noted in the *Introduction,* inspired by the story of *La Jetée.*

57 All the quotations emphasised in bold font are from Chris Marker's *ciné roman, La Jetée*, 1996.

58 On the recollection image in Deleuze's interpretation on Bergson (see e.g. 1992: Chapters 3 and 4).

59 This seeing experience is even more vividly emphasised in *Twelve Monkeys,* in which the close-up of the little Boy's eyes constructs an effective beginning scene. The experience of seeing is repeated in the protagonists dreams in the latter phase, where he, as 'James Cole', tries to decipher the repeating action-scene of his dreams.

60 The close-up of the face could be approached through Deleuze's idea of the affection-image, which is one of the three cinematographic images he discusses in the first cinema-book. The others are perception-image, and the action-image. Basically, Deleuze argues, that the modern cinema is that of the 'time-image' and classical cinema is that of the movement-image (Deleuze 1997: e.g. 4).

61 On the arts of memory and their connection to experience, see Benjamin 1929b: 311-314, and 1939a: 609-615.

62 "Der unwillkürlichen Erinnerung bietet sich-das unterscheidet sie von der willkürlichen – nie ein Verlauf dar sondern allein ein Bild." (Daher die "Unordnung" als der Bildraum des unwillkürlichen Eingedenkens) (GS 1.3: 1243)

63 See e.g. 1940: II, III.

64 Cf. Buci-Glucksmann 1994: 84.

65 Bergson 1907/1954: 7, 364.

66 I use only restricted material from Freud's *Dreams and Delusions* from the year 1907. This is one of his early psychoanalytical essays, and was written one year after the publication of *Dora* and *Three essays on sexuality*.

67 The way in which Benjamin deals with the thought of catastrophe could be re-read, for instance, from the perspective of the ninth Thesis, in which the catastrophic course of history is presented before the eyes of the *Angelus Novus*. The state that history just goes further, *daß es so weiter geht,* describes the catastrophic situation in itself. The history of mankind was not, according to this image, going towards paradise but destruction. In a way, the destruction images that started in the beginning of the century (like in Spengler's idea of the world *Untergang)* have been repeated throughout the 20th century. Only the locus of catastrophe and destruction changes.

68 Deleuze 1992: 100 ff.

69 When he comes back to his present, the voices of the conductors whisper (separate from the Script): "Jetzt sind wir so weit, der andere Hälfte von ihm is hier, der andere Hälfte in der Vergangenheit. Diese erste Teil ist ausgezeichnet gelungen.'

70 In *Twelve Monkeys,* when James Cole and Kathryn Reilly first meet it happens in a police cell. The meeting is not that pleasurable for the man, as he is in chains, being signified as a confused madman when discussing time, the past and the future. In this film, it is the woman who repeateadly thinks about recognising him. In the course of the film, the key to her puzzle is offered, as the time is materialised in the photo from the "World War I". In itself, this photo is one of the interesting temporal signs in *Twelve Monkeys*, because its background in the film-narrative is constructed to signify all the temporalities merged in order to prove of Cole's sanity.

71 This construction of the 'dateless' present, which is simultaneously possible and impossible, is a further detail that is missing in the *Twelve Monkeys.* Although the 1990's film describes 'time travelling' as well, it insistently signifies time in more conventional way through dates and years.

72 *Twelve Monkeys* liberated this museum-time into the 'army of the Twelve Monkeys' as the young people who freed the animals of the zoo into the streets. Symbolically, this is a successful contrast to Marker's museum-scene.

73 This is also discussed in my article, *Shopping Bag Lady and Politics*, in which I 'read' the temporal elements in the photograph (see Lindroos 1996).

74 For instance, Breton's *L'amour fou* (1937) with photos and texts or Les vases communicants (1932), which has few film stills and photographic documents. In some terms, this idea is also present in Heartfield's photomontages, as he claims that "A photograph can (...) become a photomontage, a work of art of a special kind" (Heartfield 1977: 26)

75 "Wegweiser beginnen ihm gleichzeitig die illustrierten Zeitungen aufzustellen. Richtige oder falsche – gleichviel. In ihnen ist die Beschriftung zum ersten Mal obligat geworden. Und es ist klar, daß sie einen ganz anderen Charakter hat als der Titel eines Gemäldes. Die Direktiven, die der Betrachter von Bildern in der illustrierten Zeitschrift durch die Beschriftung erhält, werden bald darauf noch präziser und gebieterischer im Film, wo die Auffassung von jedem einzelnen Bild durch die Folge aller vorangangenen vorgeschrieben erscheint ."(1939c: 485)

76 Although, as Marker notices in *The rest is silent* (1995), there does not exist a 'real' silent film, since from the beginning they included at least music.

77 Edmund Husserl analysed the inner consciousness of time in the beginning of the century, especially through the example of music (see Husserl (1981) *Vorlesungen zur Innere Zeitbewußtsein*, 1905).

78 Deleuze 1992: 99-102. For more on the chrystal image, see Deleuze's chapter *The Chrystals of Time.*

79 Arendt 1970: 82-87; 1981: 164 ff.

80 Darko shel Adam al-pi Torat ha-Hassidut (1964), quoted after Ouaknin 1995: 59.

81 Cf. Konersmann 1991: 126-127.

82 This concerns only *La Jetée*, since Markers other films include an extensive thematization of the history, memory and experience, for instance, in Sans Soleil.

83 Cf. A.Benjamin 1991: 157; Osborne 1994: 61.

84 "Erinnerung und Erwachen sind aufs engste verwandt. Erwachen ist nämlich die dialektische, kopernikanische Wendung des Eingedenkens. Es ist ein eminent durchkomponierter Umschlag der Welt des Träumers in die Welt der Wachen." (PW: 1058)

NOTES TO PART IV

1 E.g. Fukuyama 1992. Demandt 1993.

2 The political problems connected to the ideologies of historical progress, technical development and economic growth become visible for instance in pollution, ozone-depletion or new military and communicative technologies, as is outlined already in Beck's *Risk Society*. On the political discussion on temporality, see e.g. Barbara Adam 1995, Ulrich Beck 1986, 1993 or Nowotny, 1989.

3 Ansén 1997: 45.

4 Osborne 1995: X.

5 However, as Koselleck himself notes, this 'saddletime' is neither determinate nor absolute, rather, it is helpful in visualising the categorisation of the temporality of concepts in specific historical times.

6 Koselleck 1989: 354-359. In this, Koselleck refers to the joke on the communism as a horizon, cf. 256-357.

7 Cf. Koselleck 1988b: 17-18, 27; 1989: 62-66. On the other hand, Koselleck also discusses how the images can be caricatures of death, see Daumier und der Tod (1985).

8 Koselleck 1988a: 18.

9 Cf. Scholem 1963: 24-55.

10 See Palonen 1985 e.g: 96-114; 160-163. More specifically on the conceptual differences between policy, polity, politicisation, Palonen 1993: Introduction.

11 This is actually not so different from the German literary scene from the 1920's and 1930's and especially the Expressionist idea of politics, that includes the aspects of creativity and the new, as an interruption of the continuity (see Palonen 1985: 49, 115-124). Also, on the French discussion of politics as interpretation on a phenomena cf. Palonen 1989, especially 'politics as art': 65-69; 102-108.

12 Adorno 1978: 218.

13 Since the 1960's, the intellectual debate has brought the ideas of the 'French Theory' and neostructuralism to the foreground, including the topic of the relations between the concept and understanding of the dis-linearity of history and its temporality in the after-modern era (see e.g. Foucault 1990, Lyotard 1982).

14 Schedler and Santiso in IPSR 1998, Vol. 19, No 1: 5. On the analysis of parliament and time, see e.g. Riescher 1994, and the general issue on the history of democratic time, Riescher 1995. On political systems and temporality, see Maier 1987. On temporality in political theory e.g. Hannah Arendt, 1981; and on the essay-like presentation on the relationships between time and politics, Lenain 1987, 1989.

15 Terms of discussing the *Ungleichzeitigkeit* are, for instance, discussing the temporality of different sexes and genders (e.g. Kristeva 1976, 1982: esp. 231-268, 1990) and ethnic groups or races (e.g. Homi Bhabha, 1990).

16 See *International Political Science Review* 1/1998.

17 E.g. Castoriadis 1990: 144-148.

18 Cf. Robins 1995: 41.

19 Cf. Henning 1995.

20 E.g. the art exhibition, called Sensation (Royal Academy, London 1997), presented by the Young British Artists (YBAS), who repeated the issues of death, abnormality or repetition in various disguises. This makes it questionable, whether the avant-garde has detached itself from the cult issues or whether it is even more closely tied to them than in the beginning of this century.

21 Deleuze 1992: 37. The concept of movement-image is discussed throughout Deleuze's *Cinema 1*.

22 Deleuze 1997: 37.

23 Appadurai 1996: 165.

24 Cf. Lister 1995: Mitchell 1992.

REFERENCES

WALTER BENJAMIN LITERATURE

The references are made following the chronologisches Verzeichnis in GS VII.934-961. They characterize mainly the time when Benjamin finished the writing the texts and are not always identical with the publishing year

(1915a) *Das Leben der Studenten*, GS II.1.
(1915b) *Der Regenbogen*, GS VII.1.
(1916) *Über die Sprache überhaupt und über die Sprache des Menschen*, GS II.1.
(1917) *Über die Malerei oder Zeichen und Mal*, GS II.2.
(1918) *Über das Programm der kommenden Philosophie (Programm)* GS II.1.
(1919) *Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutschen Romantik*, GS I.1.
(1920) *Zur Malerei*,GS VI.
(1921a) *Zur Kritik der Gewalt* (KdG), GS II.1.
(1921b) *Theologisch-politisches Fragment*, GS II.1.
(1921c) *Kapitalismus als Religion*, GS VI
(1922) *Goethes Wahlverwandtschaften*, GS I.1.
(1923) *Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers*, GS IV.1.
(1924) *Neapel (mit Asja Lacis)*, GS IV.1.
(1925) *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels (Trauerspiel)*. GS I.1. (1928).
(1926) *Einbahnstraße* (1928), GS IV.1.
(1927a) *Zur Lage der russischen Filmkunst*, GS II.2
(1927b) *Erwiderung an Oscar A.H.Schmitz*, GS II.2.
(1927c) *Moskau*, GS IV.1.
(1927d) *Franz Hessel*,GS III.
(1928) *Einbahnstraße*. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.
(1929a) *Der Sürrealismus*, GS II.I.
(1929b) *Zum Bilde Prousts*, GS II.1.
(1930) *Theorien der deutschen Faschismus*, GS III.
(1931) *Kleine Geschichte der Photographie*, GS II.1.

(1932) *Aus einer kleinen Rede über Proust, an meinem vierzigsten Geburtstag gehalten*, GS II.3: 1064.
(1933a) *Lehre vom Ähnlichen*, GS II.1.
(1933b) *Über das mimetische Vermögen*, GS II.1.
(1933c) *Erfahrung und Armut*, GS II.1.
(1933d) *Berliner Kindheit um 1900*, GS IV.1. (GS VII.1. *Fassung letzte Hand*)
(1933e) *Strenge Kunstwissenschaft(Zweite Fassung)*, GS III.
(1934) *Der Autor als Produzent. Ansprache im Institut zum Studium des Fascismus in Paris.* 27.4.1934, GS II.2.
(1935a) *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit. (Kunstwerk, (Erste Fassung)* GS I.2
(1935b) *Probleme der Sprachsoziologie*, GS III.
(1935c) *Johann Jacob Bachofen*, GS II.1.
(1936a) *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit. (Kunstwerk, (zweite Fassung)* GS VII.1.
(1936b) *Der Erzähler*, GS II.2.
(1936c) *Pariser Brief I*, GS III.
(1936d) *Pariser Brief II*, GS III
(1937) *Eduard Fuchs, der Sammler und der Historiker*, GS II.2.
(1938) *Das Paris des Second Empire bei Baudelaire*, GS I.2.
(1939a) *Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire*, GS I.2.
(1939b) *Was ist das epische Theater ?*, (2) GS II.2.
(1939c) *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit. (Kunstwerk, dritte Fassung*, 1936-1939) GS I.2.
(1939d) *Zentralpark*, GS I.2.
(1940) *Über den Begriff der Geschichte(Theses)*, GS I.2. *(Die neue Thesen*, GS I.3.)

Posthumous

(1978a) *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels (Trauerspiel)*. (1928), Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.
(1978b) *Briefe 1,2*. (Br.) (Hg. Scholem, Adorno). Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/Main.
- (1985) Gerschom Scholem (Hg.), Walter Benjamin Gerschom Scholem Briefwechsel 1933-1940. Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt/M.

(1980) *Moskauer Tagebuch*. Mit einem Vorwort von Gerschom Scholem. Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt/M.
(1981) *Versuche über Brecht*. Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt/M.
(1983) *Das Passagen-Werk 1-2*. (PW) Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt/M.
(1991) *Gesammelte Schriften* (GS). Unter Mitwirkung von Adorno und Scholem. Hg. Tiedemann und Schweppenhäuser. Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt/M.
(1992) Walter Benjamin *Illuminations. With an introduction by Hannah Arendt.* Translated by Harry Zohn. Fontana Press, Harper Collins Publishers, London.

STUDIES ON WALTER BENJAMIN

Giorgio Agamben (1993) *Infancy and History. The Destruction of Experience.* Verso, London, New York.

Hannah Arendt (1971) *Benjamin. Brecht. Zwei Essays.* Piper, München.

Ian Balfour (1991) "Reversal, Quotation" (Benjamin's History). In: *Modern Literature Notes (MLN)*. German Issue on Walter Benjamin, 106 /3.

Andrew Benjamin (1994) Time and Task: Benjamin and Heidegger Showing the Present. In: *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy. Destruction and Experience.*

Norbert Bolz (1984) *Bedingungen der Möglichkeit historischer Erfahrung. In: Bolz/Witte (Hg.) Passagen. Walter Benjamins Urgeschichte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts.* Fink Verlag, München.

Vera Bresemann (1989) Ist die Moderne ein Trauerspiel? Das Erhabene bei Benjamin. In: *Das Erhabene. Zwischen Grenzerfahrung und Größenwahn* (Hg.) Pries. Acta Humaniora, UCH, Weinheim.

Christine Buci-Glucksmann (1994) *Baroque Reason. The Aesthetics of Modernity.* Translation by Patrick Camiller. With an Introduction by Bryan S. Turner. Sage Publications, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi.

Susan Buck-Morss

-(1977) *Negative Dialectics: Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurt Institute.* The Free Press, New York.

-(1990) *The Dialectics of Seeing. Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project,* MIT Press Cambridge, Massachusettes.

Eduardo Cadava (1992) Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History. In: *diacritics,* 1992.

Howard Caygill,

-(1994) Benjamin, Heidegger and the Destruction of Tradition. In: *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy. Destruction and Experience.*

-(1998) *Walter Benjamin. The Colour of Experience.* Routledge, London and New York.

Jacques Derrida (1991) *Gesetzeskraft.* Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

Michael Diers (1997) Einbandlektüre. Zu Walter Benjamins Briefsammlung Deutsche Menschen. In: *Schlagbilder. Zur politischen Ikonographie der Gegenwart.* Fischer, Frankfurt/M.

Alexander Garcia Düttmann (1994) Tradition and Destruction: Walter Benjamin's Politics of Language. In: *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy. Destruction and Experience.*

Terry Eagleton (1981) *Walter Benjamin or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism.* Verso Editions and NLB, London

Heinz Eidam (1992) *Discrimen der Zeit. Zur Historiographie der Moderne bei Walter Benjamin.* Königshausen & Neumann, Würzburg.

David S. Ferris (Ed.) (1996) *Walter Benjamin. Theoretical Questions.* Stanford University Press, Stanford, California.

Werner Fuld (1981) *Walter Benjamin. Zwischen den Stühlen.* Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt/M.

Jeanne-Marie Gagnebin (1978) *Zur Geschichtsphilosophie Walter Benjamins. Die Unabgeschlossenheit des Sinnes.* Verlag Palm&Enke Erlangen, Erlangen.

Rodolphe Gasché (1994) Objective Diversions: On Some Kantian Themes in Benjamin's 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'. In: *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy. Destruction and Experience.*

Graeme Gilloch (1996) *Myth and Metropolis. Walter Benjamin and the City.* Polity Press, Cambridge.

Krista Greffrath (1981) *Metaphorische Materialismus. Untersuchung zur Geschichtsbegriff Walter Benjamins.* Fink Verlag, München.

Henning Günther (1974) *Walter Benjamin. Zwischen Marxismus und Theologie.* Walter-Verlag, Olten.

Jürgen Habermas (1972) Bewußtmachende oder rettende Kritik – die Aktualität Walter Benjamins. In: *Zur Aktualität Walter Benjamins.*

Anselm Haverkamp (1992) *Notes on the 'Dialectical Image' (How Deconstructive Is It?* diacritics, 1992

Helmut Heißenbüttel (1963) Zu Walter Benjamins Spätwerk. In: *Merkur. XXII Jg.* Heft 238-248.

Christoph Hering (1979) *Der Intellektuelle als Revolutionär. Walter Benjamins Analyse intellektueller Praxis.* Fink Verlag, München.

Michael J. Jennings (1987) *Dialectical Images. Walter Benjamin's Theory of Literary Criticism.* Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London.

Gerhard Kaiser (1974) *Benjamin, Adorno. Zwei Studien.* Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

Gertrud Koch (1994) Cosmos in Film: On the Concept of Space in Walter Benjamin's 'Work of Art' Essay. In: *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy. Destruction and Experience.*

Ralf Konersmann (1991) *Erstarrte Unruhe. Walter Benjamins Begriff der Geschichte.* Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt/M.

H.D.Kittsteiner (1986) Walter Benjamin's Historicism. In: *New German Critique* 39/1986.

Kia Lindroos

-(1993) *Reding a Text Historically or Politically? A Benjaminian approach. In: Reading the political. Exploring the Margins of Politics.* (Eds.) Palonen, Parvikko. Finnish Political Science Association, Helsinki.

-(1996) Shopping Bag Lady and Politics. In: *Exploring the Chronospace of Images.* (Eds.) Parvikko&Kanerva. SoPhi 4. University of Jyväskylä.

Eugene Lunn (1982) *Marxism and Modernism. A Historical Study of Lukacs, Brecht, Benjamin and Adorno.* University of California Press, Berkeley.

Michael Löwy (1996) Walter Benjamin and Surrealism. The story of a revolutionary spell. In: *Radical Philosophy* 80. Nov/Dec 1996.

Paul de Man (1986) Conclusions:Walter Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator'. In: *The Resistance Theory*. University of Minnesota Press, Minnesota.

Michael Makropoulos (1989) *Modernität als ontologischer Ausnahmezustand? Walter Benjamins Theorie der Moderne*. Fink Verlag, München.

Herbert Marcuse (1965) Nachwort. In: *Walter Benjamin. Zur Kritik der Gewalt und andere Aufsätze*. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

John McCole (1993) *Walter Benjamin and the Antinomies of Tradition*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London.

Bettina Menke (1991) *Sprachfiguren: Name-Allegorie-Bild nach Walter Benjamin*. Fink Verlag, München.

Herbert Nagel (1980) Erfahrung und Armut. Aus einem Gespräch mit der Redaktion 'Alternative'. In: *Alternative* 32/33.

Rainer Nägele (1991) Das Beben der Barock in der Moderne: Walter Benjamins Monadologie. In: *Modern Literary Notes* 106.3.

Peter Osborne

-(1994a) Introduction: Destruction and Experience. With Andrew Benjamin. In: *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy. Destruction and Experience*

-(1994b) Small-scale Victories, Large-Scale Defeats: Walter Benjamin's Politics of Time. In: *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy. Destruction and Experience.*

-(1998) Philosophizing beyond Philosophy: Walter Benjamin reviewed. In: *Radical Philosophy* 88. March/April 1998.

Anson Rabinbach (1979) Introduction to Benjamin's "Doctrin of the Similar". In: *New German Critique* 17.

Michael Rumpf (1976) Radikale Theologie. Benjamin's Beziehung zu Carl Schmitt. In: *Walter Benjamin, Zeitgenosse der Moderne. Literaturwissenschaft*, Bd. 30. Scriptor Verlag, Kronberg.

Detlev Schöttker (1992) Walter Benjamin und seine Rezeption. In: *Leviathan. Zeitschrift für Sozialwissenschaft* 2.

Ullrich Schwarz (1984) *Walter Benjamin: Mimesis und Erfahrung. In: Grundprobleme der großen Philosphen. Philosophie der Gegenwart VI*. UTB Vandenhoek, Göttingen.

Marlene Stoessel (1983) *Aura. Das vergessene Menschliche*. Hanser Verlag, München/Wien.

Rolf Tiedemann

-(1983a) Einleitung des Herausgebers. In: *Walter Benjamin. Das Passagen-Werk* (PW). Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

-(1983b) *Dialektik im Stillstand. Versuche zum Spätwerk Walter Benjamins*. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

Walter Benjamin and the Demands of History (1996) (Ed.) Michael P. Steinberg. Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London.

Walter Benjamin's Philosophy. Destruction and Experience (1994) (Eds.) Andrew Benjamin and Peter Osborne. Routledge, London and New York.

Samuel Weber

-(1991) Genealogy of Modernity: History, Myth and Allegory in Benjamin's 'Origin of the German Mourning Play'. In: *Modern Literary Notes,* 106/3.

-(1992) Taking Exception to Decision: Walter Benjamin and Carl Schmitt. In: *diacritics*, 1992.

-(1996) Mass Mediauras; or, Art, Aura, and Media in the Work of Walter Benjamin. In *Walter Benjamin. Theoretical Questions.*

Heiner Weidman (1992) *Flanerie, Sammlung, Spiel: die Erinnerung des 19.Jahrhunderts bei Walter Benjamin.* Fink Verlag, München.

Sigrid Weigel

-(1992) Passagen und Spuren des 'Leib-und Bildraums' in Benjamin's Schriften. In: *Weigel (Hg.) Leib-und Bildraum. Lektüren nach Benjamin.* Böhlau Verlag, Köln, Weimar, Wien.

-(1996) *Body-and Image-Space. Re-reading Walter Benjamin.* Routledge, London and New York.

Lieselotte Wiesenthal (1973) *Zur Wissenschaftstheorie Walter Benjamins.* Athäneum, Frankfurt/M.

Zur Aktualität Walter Benjamins (1972). Aus Anlaß des 80. Geburtstags von Walter Benjamin. (Hg.) Unseld. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

JOURNALS

Alternative 32/33. 23. Jahrgang, Juni/August, 1980.

Critical Inquiry, 16 /1990.

diacritics. a review of contemporary criticism. "Commemorating Walter Benjamin". Fall-Winter. Vol. 22. N:o 3-4, 1992

Leviathan. Zeitschrift für Sozialwissenschaft 2/1992

Merkur Heft 238-248. 22. Jg. 1963.

Merkur Heft 9/10 Jg. 47. Sondernummer: Medien. Neu? Über Macht, Ästhetik, Fernsehen, 1993

International Political Science Review (IPSR). Vol 19, No 1. 1998.

Modern Literature Notes (MLN). German Issue. Walter Benjamin. 106/3, 1991.

New German Critique. An Interdisciplinary Journal of German Studies. 17/1979.

New German Critique An Interdisciplinary Journal of German Studies. 39/1986.

Radical Philosophy 80. November/December, 1996.

Radical Philosophy 88. March/April, 1998.

Theory, Culture & Society. Vol. 5 /2-3, 1988.

OTHER LITERATURE CONSULTED

Barbara Adam (1995) *The Social Analysis of Time.* Polity Press, Cambridge.

Theodor W. Adorno

-(1978/1951). *Minima moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life.* Verso, London.

-(1979) Komposition für den Film. In: *Gesammelte Schriften.* Band 15. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

Theodor W Adorno, Max Horkheimer (1997/1944). *Dialectic of Enlightenment.* Verso London, New York.

Louis Althusser (1970) *Ideology and ideological State Apparatuses.* New Left Books, London.

Reiner Ansén (1997) *Zeitlichkeit und Politik. Versuch über die Teilung.* Turia & Kant Verlag, Wien.

Arjun Appadurai (1996) *Modernity at Large.* University of Minneapolis Press, Minnesota.

Hannah Arendt,

-(1970) *On Violence.* A Harvest/HBJ Book. New York, London.

-(1981) *Vita aktiva oder vom tätigen Leben.* Piper, München, Zürich.

Aristoteles (1987) *Physik (Phys.)* Vorlesungen über Natur. (Hg.) Hans Günter Zekl. Felix Meiner.

Augustinus, Aurelius.

-(1914) Confessiones. In: *Ausgewählte Schriften.* VII Verlag der Jos Köselschen Buchhandlung, Kempten & München.

-(1911, 1914) De civitate Dei. In: *Ausgewählte Schriften I-III.* Verlag der Jos Köselschen Buchhandlung, Kempten & München.

Roland Barthes (1985) *La chambre claire.* Cahiers du Cinéma, Gallimard/Seuil, Paris.

Jean Baudrillard

-(1981) Requiem for the Media, In: *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign.* Telos Press, St. Louis.

-(1988) *Selected Writings,* Standford University Press, Stanford.

Ulrich Beck

-(1986) *Risikogesellschaft. Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne.* Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

-(1993) *Die Erfindung des Politischen.* Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

Andrew Benjamin

-(1991) *Art, Mimesis and the Avant-garde. Aspects of a Philosophy of Difference.* Routledge, London & New York.

-(1997) *Present Hope. Philosophy, Architecture, Judaism.* Routledge, London and New York

Henri Bergson

-(1889/1960) *Time and Free Will. An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness.* (Orig. Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience,).

Harper Torchbooks, Harper and Brothers, New York.
-(1907/1954) *Creative Evolution* Macmillan, London.
-(1911/1988) *Matter and Memory (Matiere et Mémoire)*. Zone Books, New York.

Homi Bhabha (1990) Introduction: narrating the nation In: *Nation and Narration*. Routledge,London and New York.

Bildlichkeit. Internationale Beiträge zur Poetik (1990) (Hg.) Volker Bohn. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

Hans Blumenberg (1983) Legitimität der Neuzeit. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

Ernst Bloch,
- (1985) *Geist der Utopie*. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.
- (1979) *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

Karl Heinz Bohrer (1981) *Plötzlichkeit. Zum Augenblick des ästhetischen Scheins.* Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

Andrew Bowie (1997) *From Romanticism to Critical Theory. The Philosophy of German Literary Theory*. Routledge, London and New York.

Norbert Bolz (1989) *Auszug aus der entzauberten Welt. Philosophischer Extremismus zwischen den Weltkriegen*. Fink Verlag, München.

Bertolt Brecht (1973) *Arbeitsjournal: erster Band 1938 bis 1942*. (Ed.) Hecht. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

Martin Burckhardt (1994) *Metamorphosen von Raum und Zeit. Eine Geschichte der Wahrnehmung*. Campus Verlag, Frankfurt, New York.

Peter Bürger (1974) *Theorie der Avantgarde*. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

Cornelius Castoriadis (1990) *Le monde Morcelé*. Éditions du Seuil, Paris.

Gilles Deleuze
- (1997) *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*.The Athlone Press, London.
- (1992) *Cinema 2. The Time-Image*. The Athlone Press, London.

Alexander Demandt (1993) *Endzeit? Die Zukunft der Geschichte*. Siedler Verlag, Hamburg.

Jacque Derrida (1976) *Of Grammatology*. John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

Michael Diers (1997) *Schlagbilder. Zur politischen Ikonographie der Gegenwart.* Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt/M.

Norbert Elias (1992) *Time: An Essay*. Blackwell, Oxford, Cambridge.

Encyclopedia of Time (1994)(Ed.) Samuel L. Macey. Garland Publishing Inc. New York & London.

Michel Foucault
-(1977a) *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of The Prison"*. Penguin Press, London.
-(1977b) *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews.* (Ed.) Bouchard. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York.

-(1983) *This is Not a Pipe. With Illustrations and Letters by René Magritte.* Translated and ed. by James Harkness. University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London.

-(1989a) *Vom Licht des Krieges zur Geburt der Geschichte. Vorlesungen vom 21. und 28.1.1976 am Collège de France, Paris.* Merve Verlag, Berlin.

-(1989b) *Wahnsinn und Gesellschaft: eine Geschichte des Wahns im Zeitalter der Vernunft (orig. Histoire de la folie, 1961).* Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

-(1990) *Die Ordnung der Dinge. Eine Archäologie der Humanwissenschaften* (orig. Les Mots et Les choses, 1966). Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

-(1991) *Von der Subversion des Wissens.* Fischer, Frankfurt/M.

Julius T. Fraser (1992) *Die Zeit. Auf den Spuren eines vertrauten und doch fremden Phänomens.* DTV, München

Francis Fukuyama (1992) *Das Ende der Geschichte. Wo stehen wir?* Kindler Verlag, München.

Sigmund Freud (1959) Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's Gradiva (1907/1906). In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud.* Vol. IX. The Hogarth Press, London.

Anthony Giddens

-(1987) *Social Theory and Modern Sociology,* Cambridge, Polity Press.

-(1991) *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the late Modern Age.* Cambridge, Polity Press.

Johann Wolfgang Goethe

-(1981) *Werke, Bd. 10.* Hamburger Ausgabe. Wegener, Hamburg.

-(1974) *Faust. Der Tragödie (1825).* Reclam, Stuttgart.

John G. Gunnell

-(1987) *Political Philosophy and Time. Plato and the Origins of Political Vision.* The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London.

-(1994) Political Theory and Philosophy. In: *Encyclopedia of Time* (Ed.) Samuel L. Macey. Garland Publishing Inc., New York & London.

Joseph Görres (1828/1958) Die wahre und falsche Geschichte. In: *Gesammelte Schriften* Bd. 15. Köln

Jürgen Habermas (1989) *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere.* Polity Press, Cambridge.

Stephen Hawking (1988) A *Brief History of Time.* Bantam Books, Toronto, New York, London.

G.W.Fr. Hegel,

-(1827/1989) *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse.(Hg.) von Bonsiepen und Lucas.* Felix Meiner Verlag, Hamburg.

-(1830/1955) *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte.(Hg.) Hoffmeister.* Felix Meiner, Hamburg.

Martin Heidegger

-(1928/ 1986)*Sein und Zeit* Max Nimeyer Verlag, Tübingen.

-(1935/1960) *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes.* Reclam, Stuttgart.

John Heartfield (1977) *Photomontages of the Nazi Period.* Universe Books, New York.

Agnes Heller (1993) *A Philosophy of History in Fragments.* Blackwell, Oxford, Cambridge.

Michelle Henning (1995) digital encounters: mythical pasts and electronic presence. In: *the photographic image in digital culture.*

Edmund Husserl (1981) Die Vorlesungen über das Innere Zeitbewusstsein aus dem Jahre 1905. In: *Geschichte der Philosophie in Text und Darstellung. 20. Jahrhundert. (Hg.) Wiehl.* Reclam, Stuttgart.

Max Horkheimer (1990) *Gesammelte Schriften Band 10. Nachgelassene Schriften 1914-1931.* Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt/M.

Image et politique. Colloque sous la présidence de Paul Virilio, 1998. Docquiert, Piron (Coordination) Actes sud/AFAA. Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie.

International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers 2 (1991) Directors. (Ed.) Nichola Thomas. Second edition, St. James Press, Chicago and London.

Martin Jay (1973) *The Dialectical Imagination: A history of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950.* Boston.

Kino-Eye: *The Writings of Dziga Vertov* (1984) (Ed.) Michelson. University of California Press, Berkley.

Siegfried Kracauer
-(1987/1947) *From Caligari to Hitler. A Psychological History of German Film.* Princeton University Press, Princeton.
-(1995) *The Mass Ornament. Weimar Essays.* Translated, Edited, and with an Introduction by Thomas Y. Levin. Harward University Press, Cambridge, Massachusettes, London.

Rosalind E. Krauss (1996) *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths.* The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusettes, London, England.

Julia Kristeva
-(1982) *Die Chinesin. Die Rolle der Frau in China.* Ullstein, Franfurt/M, Berlin, Wien.
-(1990) *Fremde sind wir uns selbst,* Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

Reinhart Koselleck
-(1972) Einleitung. In: *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe, Bd. 1, XIII-XXVIII.* Ernst Klett Verlag, Stuttgart.
-(1975) "Fortschritt". In: *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe.* (Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprachen in Okzident). (Hg.) Brunner, Gonze, Koselleck. Bd 2. Ernst Klett Verlag, Stuttgart.
-(1980) 'Fortschritt' und 'Niedergang' – Nachtrag zur Geschichte zweier Begriffe. In: Koselleck und Widmer (Hg.) *Niedergang. Studien zu einem geschichtlichem Thema.* Clett-Cotta, Stuttgart.

-(1985a) Die Verzeitlichung der Utopie. In: *Utopieforschung 3* (Hg.) Voßkamp. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.
-(1985b) Daumier und der Tod. In: *Modernität und Tradition. Festschrift für Max Imdahl.* Hg. Boehm, Stierle, Winter. Fink Verlag, München.
-(1985c) Fortschritt und Beschleunigung. Zur Utopie der Aufklärung. In: *Der Traum der Vernunft. Vom Elend der Aufklärung.* Eine Veranstaltungsreihe der Akademie der Künste, Berlin. Luchterhand.
-(1988a) Begriffsgeschichtliche Anmerkungen zur 'Zeitgeschichte'. In: *Die Zeit nach 1945 als Thema kirchlicher Zeitgeschichte.* Referate der internationalen Tagung in Hüningen/Bern 1985. Conzenius, Greschat, Kocher (Hg.) Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen.
-(1988b) Erfahrungswandel und Methodenwechsel. Eine historisch-anthropologische Skizze. In: *Meier, Rüsen (Hg.) Historische Methode.* DTV, München.
-(1989) *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten.* Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.
-(1994) Einleitung. In: *Der politische Totenkult, Kriegdenkmale in der Moderne.* (Hg.) Koselleck, Heismann. Fink Verlag, München.

Asja Lacis (1976) *Revolutionär im Beruf. Berichte über proletarisches Theater, über Meyerhold, Brecht, Benjamin und Piscator.* Rogner & Bernhard, München.

Philippe Lacoue-Labarthes & Jean-Luc Nancy (1990) "The Nazi Myth". In: *Critical Inquiry* 16 /1990.

Jacques Lacan (1977) *Écrits. A Selection.* Tavistock, London.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1720/1975) *Monadologie.* Reclam, Stuttgart 1975.

Pierre Lenain
-(1987) *Le Temps Politique.* Economica, Paris.
-(1989) *L'instant politique.* Economica, Paris.

Martin Lister (1995) Introductory Essay. In: *the photographic image in digital culture.*

Karl Löwith,
-(1960) *Gesammelte Abhandlungen, Zur Kritik der Geschichtlichen Existenz.* Kohlhammer, Stuttgart.
-(1983) Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen. In: *Sämtlichen Schriften, Bd. 2.* Kohlhammer. Stuttgart.

Georg Lukács (1923) *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein.* Malik Verlag, Berlin.

Jean-Francois Lyotard (1984) *The postmodern condition* (Le condition postmoderne). Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Kevin Macdonald and Mark Cousins (1996) *Imagining Reality: The Faber Book of Documentary.* Faber and Faber, London & Boston.

Niccolo Machiavelli (1988) *Il Principe/ The Prince.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Charles S. Maier (1987) Politics of Time. In: *Changing Boundaries of the Political*, (Ed.) Maier. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Chris Marker
-(1995) The Rest is Silent. In: *La Petite Illustration Cinématographique. Wexner Center for the Arts, Ohio State University.* 158 http://cs.art.rmit.edu.au/projects/media/marker/
-(1996) *La Jetée ciné-roman.* The book version of the science fiction film La Jetée (1964). French and English. MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London.

Ciacomo Marramao (1989) *Macht und Säkularisierung. Die Kategorie der Zeit.* Verlag Neue Kritik, Frankfurt/M.

Marx/Engels/Lenin (1987) *Uber Kultur, Ästhetik, Literatur.* Reclam, Leibzig.

Friedrich Meinecke (1959) *Zur Theorie und Philosophie der Geschichte.* W*erke IV.* (Hg.) Kessel. Koehler, Stuttgart.

Scott McQuire (1998) *Visions of Modernity. Representation, Memory, Time and Space in the Age of the Camera.* Sage Publications, London, New Delhi.

Mitchell, W.J.T.
-(1986) *Iconology. Image, Text,Ideology.* The University of Chicago Press. Chicago and London.
-(1990) Was ist ein Bild? In: *Bildlichkeit. Internationale Beiträge zur Poetik.* (Hg.) Volker Bohn. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.
-(1992) *The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the post-Photographic Era.* MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusettes.
-(1994) *Picture Theory. Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation.* The University of Chicago Press. Chicago & London.

Laura Mulvey (1975)Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. In: *Screen* 16/3.

Jean-Luc Nancy (1993) *The Birth of Presence.* Standford University Press. Standford, California.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1979) *Werke.* Schlechta. Ullstein.

Helga Nowotny (1989) *Eigenzeit: Entstehung und Strukturierung eines Zeitgefühls.* Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

Peter Osborne (1995) *The Politics of Time. Modernity and Avant-garde.* Verso, London, New York.

Marc-Alain Ouaknin (1995) *The Burnt Book. Reading the Talmud.* Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Kari Palonen,
-(1985) *Politik als Handlungsbegriff. Horizontwandel des Politikbegriffes in Deutschland 1890-1933.* Societas Scientiarum Fennica 28.
-(1989) *Die Thematisierung der Politik als Phänomen. Eine Interpretation der Geschichte des Begriffs Politik im Frankreich des 20. Jahrhunderts.* Societas Scientiarum Fennica 38.
-(1993) Introduction: from policy and polity to politicking and politicization. In: *Reading the Political. Exploring the Margins of Politics.* (Ed. Palonen, Parvikko) The Finnish Political Science Association. Helsinki.
-(1996) *Presentation Max Weber* as a Text in Virrat, September.

Die Philosophie und die Frage nach dem Fortschritt (1964) (Hg.) Kuhn, Wiedmann. Verlag Anton Pustet, München.

the photographic image in digital culture (1995) (Ed.) Lister. Routledge, London and New York.

J.G.A. Pocock,
-(1989) *Politics Language and Time.* University of Chicago Press
-(1975) *The Machiavellian Moment.* Princeton University Press, Princeton and London.

Edgar Allan Poe (1966) *Werke, Bd. 9.* (Hg.) Schumann und Müller, Olten.

Griselda Pollock (1990) *Vision and Difference. Femininity, Feminism and the histories of Art.* Routledge, London, New York.

Mark Poster (1996) *The Second Media Age.* Polity Press, Cambridge.

Paul Rabinow (1986) *An Interview with Michel Foucault in The Foucault Reader.* Penguin Books, London.

van Reijen, Willem; Veerman, Dick (1988) An Interview with Jean-François Lyotard. In: *Theory, Culture & Society,* Vol. 5 /2-3.

Paul Ricoeur (1985) *Time and Narrative.* University Chicago Press.

Gisela Riescher,
-(1994) *Zeit und Politik.* Nomos Verlag. Baden-Baden.
-(1995) Politik und Zeit. In: *Lexikon der Politik, Band 1. Politische Theorien (Hg.) von Dieter Nohlen.* Verlag C.H. Beck, München.

Joachim Ritter (1972) "Fortschritt" In: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie. (Hg.) Ritter.* Schwabe&Co. Verlag, Basel, Stuttgart.

Kevin Robins (1995) Will image move us still? In: *The Photographic Image in Digital Culture.*

D.N. Rodowick (1997) *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine.* Duke University Press, Durham and London.

Richard Rorty (1992) *Kontingenz, Ironie und Solidarität.* Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

Russia: An Architecture for World Revolution (1984) M.I.T. Press, Massachusettes, Cambridge.

Martin Seel (1993) Vor dem Schein kommt das Erscheinen. Bemerkungen zu einer Ästhetik der Medien. In: *Merkur Heft* 9/10, 1993.

Andreas Schedler and Javier Santiso (1998) Democracy and Time: An Invitation. In: *IPSR* Vol. 19, No 1.

Carl Schmitt (1922/1979) *Politische Theologie. Vier Kapitel zur lehre von der Souverenität.* Duncker & Humblot, Berlin.

Gerschom Scholem,
-(1963) Zum Verständnis der messianischen Idee im Judentum (1953). In: *Judaica I. Suhrkamp,* Frankfurt/M.
-(1980) *Die jüdische Mystik in ihrer Hauptströmungen.* Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M.

-(1987) *Origins of the Kabbalah.* (Orig: Ursprunge und Anfänge der Kabbala, 1962, Walter de Gruyter & Co., Berlin). The Jewish Publication Society. Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Michael Shapiro,
-(1988) *The Politics of Representation. Writing practices in Biography, Photography, and Policy Analysis.* University of Wisconsin Press.
-(1996) Images of Planetary Danger. Luciano Benetton's Ecumenical Fantasy. In: *Exploring the Chronospace of Images.* (Eds.) Parvikko&Kanerva. SoPhi 4. University of Jyväskylä

A Short History of the Movies (1996) (Eds.) Gerald Mast, Bruce F. Kawin. Allyn and Bacon, Boston, London, Toronto, Sydney,Tokio, Singapore.

Jon Simons (1997) *From Ideology to 'Imagology'. The Aestheticization of Political Thought.* Paper given in American Political Science Association Meeting in Wahington.

Stationen der Moderne. Die bedeutenden Kunstaustellungen des 20. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland (1988) Austellungskataloge. Berlinishe Galerie. Museum für Moderne Kunst, Photographie und Architektur.

John Tagg (1988) *The Burden of Representation.* Macmillan Press, London.

Jacob Taubes (1987) *Ad Carl Schmitt.* Merve, Berlin.

Paul Tillich (1961) *Philosophie und Schicksal.* Schriften zur Erkenntnislehre und Existenzphilosophie. Gesammelte Werke, Bd. IV. Evangelisches Verlagswerk, Stuttgart.

Paul Virilio (1995) *La vitesse de la libération.* Galilée, Paris.

Max Weber
-(1904) Die "Objektivität" sozialwissenschaftlicher und sozialpolitischer Erkenntnis In: *Gesammelte Aufsätze für Wissenschaftslehre.* JCB Mohr.UTB, Fink Verlag, München 1988.
-(1904-1905) *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus. In: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie I.* JCB Mohr.UTB, Fink Verlag, München, 1988.
-(1919) Politik als Beruf. In: *Gesammelte Politische Scriften.* JCB Mohr.UTB, Fink Verlag, München 1988.
Ludvig Wittgenstein
-(1977/1921) *Tractatus logico-philosophicus. Logisch-philosophische Abhandlung.* Suhrkamp,Frankfurt/M.
-(1958) *Blue and Brown Books,* Harper, New York.

World Film Directors. (1988) Volume Two 1945-1985. (Ed.) John Wakeman. H.W. Wilson Company, New York.